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# THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

OF THE

## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

MONDAY, APRIL 29, 1985

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Stephen J. Solarz (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SOLARZ. The subcommittee will come to order.

Tomorrow marks the 10th anniversary of the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam war. It was a conflict in which 58,000 Americans lost their lives, to say nothing of the millions of Vietnamese who were killed or crippled. Clearly the war had and continues to have a profound impact on American life, and influences our thinking on foreign policy and military involvement overseas.

Now that passions about Vietnam have cooled, it is time for Congress and the country to examine this chapter in American history, in order to draw the appropriate lessons for the future conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Inevitably, perceptions of Vietnam will shape how Americans respond to the problems that confront the United States in the Third World. Yet, the global role of the United States is too broad and our interests too complex for our foreign policy to be handicapped by a misreading, or simultaneous misreadings, of our Vietnamese experience. Competing dogmas have had their day. Dispassionate analysis is what is essential now.

For that purpose, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs has convened this hearing on "The Lessons of Vietnam."

It is not the subcommittee's purpose to make this hearing an inquest into the conduct of particular administrations, groups, or individuals, or in any way try to fix responsibility for what happened in Vietnam. We do not wish to rehash old bureaucratic battles but rather to achieve an objective understanding of those Vietnam lessons which have general validity for United States foreign policy.

In certain respects, Vietnam was sui generis. Among the factors at work were idiosyncracies of geography and history, of politics and personality that are unlikely to be replicated in any future conflict. In this sense, Vietnam is neither El Salvador nor the Philippines.

In other respects, I believe, our Vietnam experience continues to raise profound questions about the application of America's power and influence around the world. Instability or revolution in Third World countries traditionally friendly to the United States may indeed affect the balance of power between ourselves and our ad-



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versaries. One does not have to believe in falling dominoes to recognize that. Under those circumstances, the United States must work to protect its interests. In that sense, Vietnam is El Salvador and is the Philippines.

Yet because of Vietnam, Americans are more careful in asking:

How the United States defines its vital interests;

How much we ask our friends and allies to do to defend themselves and how much do we do for them;

Whether the United States should assist friendly countries under siege if the governments of those countries have minimal popular support and abuse human rights;

Whether there are circumstances in which the United States should be prepared to commit combat forces;

Whether there are situations—guerrilla wars, for example—where American combat forces are unlikely to prevail; and

How a modern democracy can sustain support of the commitment of American combat forces in Third World conflicts.

The subcommittee is honored to have testify two individuals who have served their country long and well in both public and private life, and who played important roles in the formulation of United States policy toward Vietnam. They are the Honorable Clark Clifford, a former Secretary of Defense, and now partner at the law firm of Clifford and Warnke; and the Honorable George Ball, a former Under Secretary of State. Clark Clifford and George Ball are, I must say, among the most intelligent and most impressive public servants I have ever met. I am deeply grateful to both of them not only for their willingness to come here today but their willingness in the past to share their views and perceptions about a variety of different foreign policy issues confronting our country, with me. I personally have benefited greatly from their counsel as has our entire Nation. They are also men who have always had the courage of their convictions and felt an obligation to speak truth to power.

Before asking our two witnesses to give their testimony this morning, I will now yield for a few words from my very good friend, and distinguished ranking minority member, Mr. Leach.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Ball and Mr. Clifford and certainly echo the accolades of our chairman. I would also say that our chairman has done a very thoughtful thing indeed to have hearings of this nature and would only make a couple of brief observations.

It is my observation as we look back at the Vietnam war that what we had was an unselfish group of Americans who gave their lives for the principle of a small country to achieve an objective of independence, and we also had a group of very unselfish Americans who opposed the war who believed that we might well have exacerbated that conflict.

My own sense is that if there is a lesson of the war itself that, in this particular case, it wasn't that the Pentagon or the foot soldiers let the country down, but much more that those in the political arena who couldn't recognize that a mistake had been made and couldn't retract that mistake with any degree of speed or thoughtfulness. The greatest thing we could do, in terms of lessons is to try

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to ensure from the political perspective that young people aren't called upon to sacrifice themselves for an unnecessary cause.

In any regard, I certainly look forward to these hearings, particularly the two witnesses we have before us.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Leach.

Gentlemen, your prepared testimony will be included in the record as you have submitted it, and if you would care to summarize your views that would leave the maximum amount of time for questioning. If you would like to read your testimony, that would be fine as well.

Mr. Clifford, why don't we begin with you?

## STATEMENT OF HON. CLARK CLIFFORD, FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. CLIFFORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the letter of invitation which I received, it was suggested that attention be given to looking back over the last 10 years and seeing what conclusions we might have reached regarding the war in Vietnam, which would prove to be of value as our country faces similar types of problems in the future.

I might take a few minutes to give my own view of what we were involved in and why. Interestingly enough, we went into Vietnam with the best of motives. We desired no territorial gain, we desired no economic advantages of any kind, we went in there because we felt that a small country was being subjected to great pressure from the two outstanding Communist powers, and so we went in to come to the assistance of Vietnam.

I might say that at the time we did so, it would appear that there was widespread general support for our doing it.

The chairman will remember in 1964, it was, that the Gulf of Tonkin resolution was passed by the Congress without a dissenting vote in the House and with only two dissenting votes in the Senate. The Tonkin Gulf resolution gave President Johnson the right and power to use military force in Southeast Asia.

I believe as we look back we must attempt to reach a conclusion—each of us in his own mind—regarding the exercise of judgment on our part in going into Vietnam. It is clear to me that we made a miscalculation. I think we misevaluated what was taking place in Vietnam and as I look back on it now, it seems to me that we got ourselves involved in a situation in which we should not have become involved.

I have a theory as to why we became involved in it and I think that is awfully important because as we look ahead to the possibility of different types of incidents in the future, we must know why we took certain actions in the past.

I was part of the generation that was clear on the fact that World War II never should have taken place. When Hitler and the Third Reich moved into the Rhineland back in the late thirties, they did so over the objection of the German General Staff, and if England and France, perhaps supported by the United States at the time had come forward, they could have stopped Hitler at the time without any difficulty. That is the general verdict of history today.

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They failed to do so. He moved from his occupation of the Rhineland next when he invaded Austria. There again, Britain and France had an opportunity to stop him. They did not do so.

He then, after that, moved into Czechoslovakia and you remember Chamberlain went to Munich and announced that he had achieved peace in our time.

After that, Hitler moved into Poland and that triggered the Second World War.

From my generation we looked back at that with deep concern and sorrow that we had not appreciated better what had gone on because the war could have been stopped and that terrible conflict prevented.

That lesson was well learned at the close of the Second World War when the Soviets began a period of the most expansive type of aggression. They began to move all over Europe, even began to move in many other countries through the use of what became known as the comintern, the establishment of a Communist cell. They began to put great pressure on Greece and Turkey and it was in March 1947 that President Truman delivered his famous address in which he mentioned how we should conduct ourselves, and that became known as the Truman Doctrine. He said in that speech that the United States must come to the aid of those nations which were being subjected to pressure both from within and from without by what he meant was communism.

After that came the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Marshall plan, the manner in which he broke up the blockade of Berlin. So that we learned a lesson then and we stopped Soviet aggression at that particular time.

Later on then, as we got into the early sixties, and North Vietnam was moving against South Vietnam, it is really quite clear in my mind now that our country's leaders had these two lessons in their mind:

One, when Hitler moved we defaulted, and it led to the greatest war in human history.

Second, after the war, when the Soviets moved, we sternly and immediately defended freedom in the world and put a stop to Soviet aggression.

So when our leaders saw this development in Southeast Asia, it was interpreted as a combined Soviet and Red China move to communize all of Southeast Asia, and I think the feeling then was you must get in early and excise the cancer before it metastasizes and spreads through the body politic.

I remember at one time President Eisenhower, as early as 1954, coined the expression the "domino theory." He said if Vietnam goes, then the rest of the area will go like dominoes—Laos, Cambodia, Burma, the Philippines, maybe down into the subcontinent, Australia, New Zealand, and so forth.

I remember one time President Johnson said we must stop it out there, or it will spread throughout the Pacific Basin and maybe reach our own shores.

So the motive that we had was a very valuable one. We felt that this was the time we were again being tested as history had tested previous generations. I say again, with overwhelming public sup-

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port, as indicated by the Congress' act in 1964 with only two dissenting votes, we became involved in the war.

It took more and more men, it took more and more munitions, it took more and more aid, and we found out after a while that what we thought was going to be a minor engagement finally reached the point where we had 525,000 troops there in South Vietnam.

I had a personal experience in the late summer of 1967. President Johnson sent Gen. Maxwell Taylor and me out to Southeast Asia and the Pacific to visit all of our allies there. We did that. We had long visits with heads of government and chiefs of state in each of the countries. We must have gone to eight or nine countries.

I was struck by the fact that those men much closer to the difficulty than we did not have the same degree of concern over what was taking place in Southeast Asia. I came back from that trip and reported to President Johnson what we had found there, that these men did not feel that this was a spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia. However, President Johnson depreciated that particular finding.

I should have done more about it. I think the reason that I didn't at that time was because we were constantly being told that our policy in Vietnam was a success. We were being told that our troops might be home by Christmas. We were seeing that light at the end of the tunnel. We were being told that both by our civilian officials and our leading military men. So I did not at that time make as much of it it as I might have.

Our attitude, at least mine, with reference to our succeeding in Vietnam, with our then policy, was completely destroyed by the Tet offensive in early 1968. Our enemy, we were being told, was on the ropes, that they were using young men 13 and 14 years old because they had run out of troops, and they were low on arms and ammunition, staged a simultaneous offensive throughout Vietnam, South Vietnam. You remember they even penetrated our U.S. Consulate and Embassy there. That led me to believe that we were being misinformed, that a number of people had misevaluated what was taking place.

I went to the Pentagon on assignment by President Johnson in the early part of that year, and while there I had the opportunity of interviewing all the civilian heads and all the military men. I spent a great deal of time with the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I could not get answers to my questions.

I asked, "How long do you think the war will last?"

The Joint Chiefs said, "We don't know."

I asked, "How many more men will it take?"

They didn't know.

I said, "You have recently asked for 200,000 more. Will that be enough?"

Well, we don't know.

Is the bombing being effective? Will it end the war?

Well, it is sometimes effective but it will not end the war.

Well, finally I said, "What is the plan for victory in Vietnam?"

And after a long and laborious cross examination, the answer finally came out that they would just wear the enemy down. Ulti-

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mately the enemy would capitulate because it had no further will to go on with the war.

"Do you see any of that now?"

No.

"Do you recognize any diminution in the will of the enemy?"

None.

I concluded then that we had a terrible loser on our hands. I thought it became my function, and to a great extent also George Ball, who reached this state of mind much earlier than I. A small group of us felt it became our function to do all that we could to get our country out of the war.

I was convinced then and I am convinced now that we could not win the war.

There were military suggestions as to the way we might win it. I thought that they were clearly and unequivocably fallacious. One suggestion was that we plan an Inchon-type landing halfway up the shoreline of North Vietnam, convey our troops up there by naval vessels, land them and cut right through the middle of Vietnam. It could have been done from a military sense. The trouble with it, however, was that North Vietnam had a mutual assistance pact with Red China and Red China was just aching to get in there and take on the United States. We were very hostile with Red China at that particular point.

I thought to myself, can you imagine any worse posture for our country than being engaged in a land war in the jungles of Southeast Asia with Red China, which had between 700 million and 800 million people.

The President turned that idea down. I think very wisely so.

I do not believe that if in addition to the 500,000 troops that we had, if we had sent another 500,000, I do not believe that we could have won the war.

Let me just say, as I conclude, that I believe that the greatest lesson to be drawn from it is that we failed to subject conditions there to a fundamental test. The test that our country should apply when some kind of foreign difficulty of that sort comes up, is, is the national security of the United States involved? If it is, then we should carefully consider sending combat troops. If it is not, then we should not send combat troops.

We can help with aid, economic aid, military aid, we can support nations that are fighting for their freedom. We should not go in with combat troops unless we believe that our security is actually affected and threatened.

I can see clearly now, that did not exist in Southeast Asia at the time. The fact is the whole concept of the domino theory was erroneous. What we interpreted as a great Communist push did not develop. That was not it. That was not the war. The dominoes have not fallen throughout the area. So it was a miscalculation, an honest miscalculation.

It is not the first time in our history that it has occurred. A splendid case can be made for the fact that the civil war in the United States never should have occurred if a certain number of the proper steps had been taken. But countries make miscalculations. We made one there. We misevaluated what was going on.

I Think the lesson is an important one.

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So I end up with the one major thought; that is the lesson we learned from that war, and I hope it is one that we remember.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Clifford follows:]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CLARK M. CLIFFORD, FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

President Harry S. Truman used to remark, from time to time, that the man with hindsight had 20/20 vision.

I assume that this Committee wishes its witnesses to look back over the years in which we struggled with the Vietnam problem, and to search mainly for the vital lessons that we have learned, or should have learned, from this traumatic experience.

From the vantage point of ten years later certain stark factors of importance are clearly visible. We entered the conflict in Southeast Asia with the highest moral and ethical motives. We were coming to the aid of a poor, independent country which was resisting the efforts by powerful communist powers to subjugate the country and its people. With no hope of economic or territorial gain, we were engaged in the task of attempting to preserve the freedom of South Vietnam and preventing the spread of communism in Southeast Asia and the Pacific basin.

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The overwhelming weight of opinion, in those early days, was that the forces of a monolithic communism were on the march and, if unimpeded, would engulf that part of the world and spread eastward. If there is any doubt as to the near unanimity of attitude toward the issue, one has only to consider the vote in the United States Congress in 1968 on the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Only two Senators in the entire House and Senate voted against authorizing the President to use military force in Southeast Asia.

Despite the widespread opinion that prevailed at the time, it is clear to me that our evaluation of the conditions that existed in Vietnam and Southeast Asia was in error. I have thought much about how we could have stumbled into such a costly miscalculation. I offer the following analysis as the basis for our entry into the Vietnam conflict.

I originally agreed with our country's policy. It appeared that there was a joint effort going on between the Soviet Union and Red China to spread communism throughout Southeast Asia. That is how it looked to us at the time. I was part of the generaton that had gone through the experience of World War II and I was very conscious of the fact that World War II could have been prevented if the major nations of the world had understood the danger more clearly and more accurately.

When Hitler's army of the Third Reich, for instance, marched into the Rhineland he did so against the advice of the

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German general staff, and if France and England, supported by the United States, had objected at that time and moved, I believe the war could have been stopped. But they did not. Hitler then moved into Austria. Again there was an opportunity to stop him. He had marched again over the objections of the general staff. His next move was into Czechoslovakia, and then came the invasion of Poland. That triggered World War II.

Those of my generation who went through the war had this clear recognition that if we had moved earlier it could have been prevented. That is why they were predisposed to act the way they did when they saw signs of communist expansionism. You will remember that toward the end of World War II the Soviet Union embarked on a program of aggressive expansionism. They took over the countries on their western periphery, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and later Hungary. We saw all that going on. We could have made the same mistake that we made before World War II, but fortunately we did not. Instead, we embarked upon a long and far-reaching and, I believe, masterfully-planned defense against Soviet expansionism.

There was President Truman's speech to the Congress in March 1947, in which he enunciated what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. That saved Greece and Turkey. He said that it should be the policy of the United States to come to the aid of countries which were the object of communist pressure.

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After that came the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was a message to the Soviet Union that if they were to attack any of our allies in NATO it would be construed as an attack upon the United States. It is my opinion that NATO has kept the peace in Europe and in the adjoining areas for the last thirty-five years. Then came the Marshall Plan to resuscitate and recreate the economy of free nations in Europe. Here then was a planned opposition to aggression and it proved to be eminently successful under the shield and umbrella created by the United States. The nations of Western Europe, which were prostrate when World War II ended, had an opportunity of staging a comeback. They rebuilt their war-torn economies and flourished, and I consider this time one of the proudest periods of our country's history.

Thus we had two dramatic examples before us, one showing the results of a situation where free nations refused to face up to aggression, which is what happened when the world failed to recognize what Hitler and the Third Reich were doing. Then there was the example of recognizing and resisting aggression with the successes we enjoyed at the end of World War II when we halted Soviet expansionism.

This is an over-lengthy background but it helps explain what our attitude was when the contest in Southeast Asia began. Here again we placed the events within the framework of our past experience. We thought that we had the choice either to refuse to be involved which could have resulted in a new

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wave of communism sweeping over Southeast Asia - I am not telling you what the factual situation was, I am telling you about our perception of the situation - or, we could step in and oppose what we felt was a joint aggression at the time, by the Soviet Union and Red China, both of whom were providing military and economic assistance to North Vietnam. That is how we got engaged in the contest.

I recall, for instance, that there was overwhelming support for what we were doing when the Tonkin Gulf incident occurred and the North Vietnamese fired upon a United States naval vessel. The U.S. Congress met in solemn session and passed a resolution authorizing the President to use military force in Southeast Asia to prevent further encroachment upon what looked like an aggressive design upon neighboring countries. There were only two dissenting votes out of 530 members, a Senator from Oregon and the other a Senator from Alaska. All the rest voted for the resolution. The spirit of the country at the time was that we should resist aggression. I remember an occasion when the President said that we must face up to it then or we would have to confront it in the Philippines, in Australia or in New Zealand. President Johnson said it was better to fight in Southeast Asia instead of fighting later on the west coast of California. That's the way it looked at the time.

President Eisenhower coined an expression, when he referred (in 1954) to the 'domino theory'; unless we prevented

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the first domino from toppling, the others would all go down, after South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia would fall, then Thailand, then Burma and down into the sub-continent pulling down Pakistan and India. It could then spread out in the Pacific through the Philippines and then go eastward. That was the feeling at the time and that was the basis of the so-called domino theory. President Eisenhower urged the incoming Kennedy Administration to face up to the challenge.

I had an interesting experience the day before President Kennedy took over. I accompanied President-elect Kennedy to the White House where he had an all-morning conference with President Eisenhower, who had his principal advisers with him. Eisenhower, while emphasizing the importance of Southeast Asia, went so far as to say that we must do everything in our power to get our allies to assist us in the defense of Southeast Asia, but if we could not persuade them to do so we must do it alone. That's the way it appeared to almost everyone at the time. I supported this policy because I believed it to be right. As time went on and the war continued to rage, we built up our troops from 50,000 to over 500,000 in Vietnam. I started having doubts about the policy, but deep down I still felt that we would come out all right.

President Johnson asked General Maxwell Taylor and me to go to Southeast Asia in the fall of 1967 and we visited all the so-called troop-contributing countries, including Korea, Australia and New Zealand, to study the situation. I found

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that the heads of government and chiefs of state of those Pacific countries did not share our perception of the problem. That put some further doubts in my mind, but we appeared to be prevailing in Vietnam and it looked as though our efforts would, in the reasonably near future, lead to the establishment of peace.

At the beginning of 1968, President Johnson appointed me as Secretary of Defense and I went to the Pentagon. This was just after the Tet offensive had shattered the high hopes of an early victory. I was appointed the chairman of a group which was expected to analyze our entire participation in the war. My early weeks as Defense Secretary were devoted entirely to that problem, ten or twelve hours a day. It was in that process that my mind changed completely. I spent a number of days with our Joint Chiefs of Staff in their map room where all of the forces of the United States were designated; it was the nerve center of our entire military operations in the world. The answers that I was given by our Joint Chiefs of Staff were, to me, eminently unsatisfactory. They could not tell me when the war would end, nor how many more men it would take. They could not tell me whether the bombing of North Vietnam was proving effective. Finally, I asked for a plan of victory in Vietnam. They had none to offer. It was clear to me that our entire strategy was to maintain pressure until the attrition became unbearable for the enemy and he would be forced to capitulate. When would that point be reached? To that, too,

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they had no answer. I left those meetings with a growing sense of concern and a feeling that if we stayed in the conflict we would be courting disaster.

Some of President Johnson's advisers very much wanted to bring the war in Vietnam to an end by engaging in a land invasion of North Vietnam and occupying the country. For instance, there was a military plan to transport troops by naval vessels and make an Inchon-type landing, cutting North Vietnam in two. But there was this terrible problem that North Vietnam at the time had a mutual assistance pact with Red China. We were enemies with Red China at that stage. Every Far Eastern expert we had said, without equivocation, that the moment we started an invasion of North Vietnam it would trigger the mutual assistance pact between North Vietnam and Red China and the Chinese would enter the war. It was their opinion, with which I was in full agreement, that Red China would treat it as the opportunity of a lifetime to bleed the United States to death. Of all the alternatives I could think of, the worst was for our country to get involved in a land war some 10,000 miles away in an area bordering on China, which had a population of over 700 million at that time.

President Johnson declined to accede to the proposal to start an invasion. I believed that we had become involved in a war to which there was no end. It was after those early weeks of intense application to the problem that I became thoroughly convinced, beyond any reasonable doubt, that we should get out

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of Vietnam as soon as possible. That was the beginning of a lengthy and difficult period when it became our task to persuade President Johnson to change our country's policy in Vietnam. He didn't want to change the policy. He did it in the end, however, and bravely.

To a certain extent he had been troubled by the military asking him in March of that year (1968) to send 200,000 additional troops to Vietnam. He refused to do so. Now the people did not know and the world did not know, but I knew because of my intimate talks with President Johnson on a daily basis, that he had refused to send more troops to Vietnam because, in fact, he had decided to change our country's policy. For the first time he was willing to accept a negotiated settlement in Vietnam instead of an all-out military victory and that is the way we proceeded after that. We started negotiations with North Vietnam and they made some progress, though not as much as we had hoped. But the basic decision had been made and the incoming Nixon administraton was left with a state of affairs in which we had already reached the decision not to try to gain a military victory in Vietnam.

In the letter of invitation of the Committee to testify on the subject of Vietnam, important questions are raised regarding the impact of the Vietnam experience on our country's foreign policy in the future. I shall address myself to the questions presented.

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It is my belief that as a general principle we should not commit American combat forces unless the problem involves the national security of our country. If this had been our country's policy at the time of Vietnam, it would have been of immense importance in causing us to reach the decision to refrain from committing actual combat forces. We could have supported the South Vietnamese with advisers, with military equipment, with financial support, but stopped short of sending our troops.

As I have suggested above, we began in Vietnam because we proceeded upon the assumption that it represented the beginning of communist aggression that, unless stopped, would spread through all of Southeast Asia and into areas of strategic importance to us in the Pacific. As long as this theory prevailed, we continued to stay involved in Southeast Asia. It is my belief that gradually the American public reached the conclusion that this reasoning was incorrect and that we should withdraw our forces from that area. I believe strongly that the basis upon which we entered the war in Vietnam was a misevaluation of the circumstances that existed there. The lesson we learned is a bitter one, but if there were to be a repetition in the area of the conditions that existed back in the early 60's, I am comforted by the thought that we would not send combat forces to the area.

During the course of the war in Vietnam there were those who constantly urged that we engage in greater military

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activity in an all-out effort to win the war. It is my opinion that they were wrong. I believe that during most of the time we were there we were doing all that could be done within the limitations of the kind of war that we were fighting and the degree of public support that our policies had in this country. The kind of jungle warfare in which we were engaged did not lend itself either to the kind of training that our military had had or the vastly superior firepower we could marshal in the field. I reached the personal conclusion in early 1968 that we could not win the war, and as a result, we should withdraw as expeditiously as possible.

Some of our civilian and military advisers felt that the war could be brought to a conclusion by staging an Inchon-type landing midway in North Vietnam and moving our troops westward so as to cut North Vietnam in two. The argument had a certain surface appeal, but was rejected by President Johnson because of the fact that North Vietnam had a mutual assistance pact with Red China. It seemed clear at the time that if American combat troops were put into North Vietnam, that North Vietnam would call upon Red China for assistance, and the Chinese were all too ready, even anxious, to become involved at that time. It is difficult for me to imagine a more tragic posture for our country than to be involved in a land war in Southeast Asia with the Red Chinese, who at the time had a nation of some 800 million people.

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One of the principal arguments in favor of our participation in the war was the existence of the so-called "domino" theory. General Eisenhower coined the expression and he clearly felt strongly that if South Vietnam and Laos were to fall, the rest of the nations in Southeast Asia would topple like dominoes. The theory seemed credible to me at the time, but as we learned more and more about the conditions that existed in that part of the world, I ultimately concluded that the theory was without foundation. We have only to look at Southeast Asia today to note that the dominoes have not toppled after North Vietnam occupied South Vietnam.

After President Johnson left office and President Nixon took over, we heard a great deal about the importance of our country continuing the struggle in Southeast Asia because our country's credibility was at stake. I rejected that position then and I reject it now. Our country does not have to concern itself constantly with this bugbear of credibility. We have demonstrated it over and over again, in the First World War, the Second World War, in Korea and in our participation in world affairs in this century. In my contacts with officials of other countries of western Europe, the question in their minds did not involve the credibility of our country, but involved the wisdom of our continuing to participate in the ever-deepening struggle in this far-away place in the world.

It is my hope that the basic lesson learned in Vietnam will stand us in good stead in the years that lie ahead. As we

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look at other troubled areas of the world and as we consider what our policy should be, it is my hope that we would not send our combat personnel to the area unless, after thorough consideration, we are convinced that our national security is at stake.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Clifford, for sharing with us your thoughts on the lessons of Vietnam.

We will now hear from George Ball.

## STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE BALL, FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. BALL. Mr. Chairman, let me say first that I wholly agree with the wisdom that has just been imparted to us by Clark Clifford. Nothing was more gratifying to me than the role that he played, particularly after he had assumed command in the Defense Department, in trying to find a solution to this problem.

Let me make two points at the outset.

The first is that some event equivalent to America's intervention in the war in Vietnam was probably inevitable. We Americans needed a dramatic shock to compel us to reappraise the limits of our own power.

The second is that because a democratic nation is inherently ill equipped to fight a limited war, we should observe special precautions in committing our prestige and military force in pursuit of objectives only marginal to our national interest.

Our involvement in Vietnam was, in my view, a natural consequence of our excessive, exuberant sense of mission and power in the early 1960's. America alone had emerged from the Second World War stronger than before and was by far the richest and most powerful nation. We had played a brilliantly constructive leadership role in the immediate postwar years.

By taking the lead in creating the United Nations, we had enabled 1 billion men and women to accomplish the perilous passage from colonial dependence to juridical independence with a minimum of conflict and disruption.

Through the Marshall Plan we had made possible the speedy rebuilding of Europe.

Beginning with President Truman's modest point 4 proposal we had developed massive programs of foreign aid for the fledgling nations of the Third World.

Reacting to Stalin's aggressions we had, by combining Western strength through the North Atlantic Treat Organization, halted the European expansion of Soviet power.

And finally, by fighting the Korean War under United Nations auspices, we had checked Soviet and Chinese adventures in the East.

Meanwhile our commitments had more than kept pace with our achievements. With the Truman Doctrine, America had engaged

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itself to support free people resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure, and 14 years later, John F. Kennedy had expressed that commitment even more grandiloquently when he promised in his inaugural address that our country, in supporting the friends and combating the foes of liberty, would "fight and fight, pay any price, bear any burden, meet any handicap . . ."

Those were yesterdays, when our university faculties were left badly under strength as experts in everything from economics to dam building to chicken diseases flew incessantly around the world instructing the natives and indulging in what the sociologists presumptuously called nation building. Thus it was only natural for many Americans to conclude that there was little, if anything, we could not accomplish, even to the point of reshaping the politics of small nations in our own democratic image.

Bemused by that feeling of overwhelming confidence—almost of omnipotence—many took it for granted that we could, with a limited commitment of resources, enable the Government of Vietnam to halt the Viet Cong insurgency and forestall Hanoi's threatened intervention. For some our involvement in Vietnam seemed merely a replay of our successful conclusion of the Korean war, even though, as I insisted at the time, the two situations were fundamentally different. Nor was France's protracted and frustrating Indochinese experience accepted as a cautionary precedent.

Most of my colleagues, who actually knew little about it, dismissed it as scarcely relevant. The French, they contended, had been selfishly fighting to retain their colonies, while we were acting magnanimously on the side of freedom. Besides, France was only a second-class power, enervated by the war.

Finally, there was a pervasive tendency to measure relative power in quantitative terms. Since we had $x$ times the resources of men, wealth, and material as the North Vietnamese, all we needed to prevail was to find an effective means to apply them. In retrospect, it seems to me that the quantitative approach, whether expressed or implied, conscious or subconscious, was perhaps the greatest impediment to our proper understanding of the war. Concentration on quantitative measurements meant that all unquantifiable elements were omitted from the equation of decision. As a result, America's leaders undervalued, or almost completely ignored, certain basic facts.

The North Vietnamese had been fighting fanatically for a generation and many knew no other way of life, while motivation among the ARVN forces was poor to indifferent. The North Vietnamese saw the Americans as substitutes for the French in seeking to perpetuate Western colonial dominance. Hanoi had a highly developed network of control throughout the countryside which enabled it to mobilize the whole nation and give it a definitive advantage in intelligence gathering, while the South Vietnamese Government had only tenuous roots and little genuine support outside of Saigon.

Finally, though the conflict was all important to the North Vietnamese, it was only tangentially important to the United States. Unhappily those imponderables of elan and motivation were largely excluded from decisions dictated by quantitative measures even

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though, in the end, they proved in my judgment to be the commanding elements.

Overshadowing all these errors and omissions was the largely unexamined assumption that, since the North Vietnamese leaders were Communists receiving help from both Peking and Moscow, the struggle was in essence merely a further effort of the great Communist powers to extend their domination, this time using the North Vietnamese as surrogates. Any suggestion that Hanoi's forces and the Viet Cong might be something other than mere instruments of Moscow and Peking, that nationalism, anticolonialism, and Tonkinese imperial ambitions were major driving forces, was dismissed as reflecting a softheaded attitude toward the Communist menace.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower had warned against falling dominoes and succeeding administrations interpreted that figure of speech to mean that if we did not defend a succession of ersatz governments in South Vietnam the whole of Southeast Asia would be absorbed within the Communist orbit, and to quote one of Lyndon Johnson's more hyperbolic statements, "We would have to retreat to San Francisco."

So, events took their unhappy course. The Eisenhower administration promised limited aid to the Saigon government; the Kennedy administration committed both military and economic assistance and military advisers to help save the South Vietnamese; the Johnson administration turned our limited commitment into an all out engagement of U.S. Forces; and the Nixon administration unnecessarily extended the war a further 4 years.

Escalation proceeded at a rapid pace. In November 1961 President Kennedy decided to expand our team of military advisers beyond the 700 then in Vietnam. By the time Kennedy was killed we had 17,500 men in that beleaguered country and the balloon was going up. By the time Lyndon B. Johnson retired in 1968, there were 529,000.

In the beginning, the major figure in the Kennedy administration hoped that we could achieve our objective merely by providing weapons, equipment, and training personnel to the Vietnamese. But when that expectation proved deceptive, President Johnson, acting on the counsel of the same men who had advised Kennedy, sent bombing missions against the North and, when that also proved ineffective, committed U.S. Forces to combat roles.

Even so, the war still continued to produce disappointments, and by the latter part of 1967, a majority of the key figures of the Johnson administration had, I am certain, lost hope that the war could be won. That sentiment was lucidly summed up by the late John McNaughton, Secretary McNamara's closest adviser on the war, who wrote in May 1967:

> It now appears that no combination of actions against the North short of destruction of the regime or occupation of North Vietnam territory will physically reduce the flow of men and materiel below the relatively small amount needed by enemy forces to continue the war in the South.

Why then did our leaders not face reality and concentrate on devising a tactical plan for negotiated withdrawal?

They were deterred by a number of related considerations. First was a genuine concern for the effect of such a move on the world

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prestige of the United States and its consequences for our Vietnamese allies. They were also worried by its possible effect on the historical standing of whatever President might make that decision. I think it no accident that Presidents Johnson and Nixon each repeated the same macho slogan: "I won't be the first American President to lose a war"—a phrase that suggested their concern for their own place in history quite as much as America's long-range best interest.

All these disparate considerations were subsumed under the rubric of "national honor" which was treated as the conclusive answer to any proposal for withdrawal. But a critical mistake, in my judgment, was to define "national honor" in far too narrow terms. Our honor was not served by the unedifying spectacle of the world's most powerful nation trying to beat to death a small, poor, weak adversary, using napalm and defoliants and killing thousands of civilians in a war we could not win. Our honor would have been far better preserved had we, by stopping the killing, demonstrated a clear sense of compassion, perspective, priority, and balance. We should, in other words, have undertaken to negotiate an extrication on a basis that would involve limited but short-run costs, but freeing our country to attend to the other major world problems that confronted us.

But here the imperatives of the democratic process got in the way. To persuade the American public to make sacrifices for a limited objective, an American President is under great pressures, as I have suggested, to overstate our Nation's stake in that objective. Then, as casualties increase and the public shows more and more disbelief, the President feels compelled to sharpen the shrillness of his hyperbole and to exaggerate the costs of withdrawal to the point of precluding that sensible option.

One argument constantly reiterated was that any suggestion or withdrawal would, in John McNaughton's words, undercut America's authority "as a guarantor." In fact, Attorney General Robert Kennedy once even went so far as to ask the West Germans rhetorically: "If we do not persist to the bitter end in Vietnam how can you expect us to protect Berlin?" Few noticed that the question evoked only incredulity from the Germans. How, they asked in turn, could anyone seriously compare America's behavior in Vietnam where we had only marginal interests with our critical involvement in the defense of Western Europe? Rather than fearing that our withdrawal from Vietnam might impair our credibility, the leaders of the Western Alliance were deeply worried that our preoccupation with that small country would divert our attention from more important issues.

Indeed they did not conceal their hope that we would get out as soon as possible.

After the Tet offensive in January and February 1968, most all of the President's advisors had, I think, finally concluded that, in spite of considerations of national honor, America must try to find a way to disentangle itself. By deciding not to run in the fall election, President Johnson left that decision to his successor. Since Nixon was not responsible for involving us in the war, he was far better positioned to execute the desperately needed extrication.

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America still had 525,000 men in the field and the threat to maintain and even supplement them was our one potent bargaining counter. I am convinced that had the Nixon administration promptly told Hanoi that we were prepared either to withdraw our forces unilaterally as part of a settlement, or augment them and increase the intensity of the war in case that we were turned down, we could almost certainly have obtained a better settlement than was finally achieved more than 4 years later. But unhappily, both President Nixon and Mr. Kissinger clung to the view, discarded by the Johnson administration, that America could beat Hanoi into submission by using air power with increased ferocity.

So, not until 20 months after the Nixon administration came to power did Kissinger finally play the one bargaining card that had meaning to the North Vietnamese—the hint of an offer to withdraw U.S. troops unilaterally. But by then it was too late, President Nixon had already announced major troop withdrawals and made clear his plan for a phased withdrawal of all U.S. forces. That, of course, played into the hands of Hanoi's leaders. All they had to do was to hold on until our troops had departed and then sign an agreement that would assure their easy wiping up of the South Vietnamese. So, they signed nothing at all until we had reduced our army to a final remnant of 23,000 men who were themselves shortly scheduled to leave.

America had suffered heavily not only from the degradation of its international reputation but from the loss of domestic cohesion under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Under the Nixon administration 4 more years of fighting cost our Armed Forces over 20,000 additional deaths, while our massive use of air power, including B-52's, slaughtered at least 600,000 men, women, and children throughout Vietnam to no purpose.

I have recounted these familiar events not to blame any administration or individual, but to explain a process and to describe how a great nation can paint itself into a corner by failing to utilize, or even preserve, its indispensable freedom of maneuver. Circumstances had not required us to pursue a rigid course in Vietnam. At the very beginning President Eisenhower had carefully qualified America's commitment. The United States would, he had stated, provide aid to South Vietnam only "so long as there is a government genuinely representing the people of South Vietnam that continued to ask for our help and only so long as that government maintained an adequate standard of performance both in the conduct of the war and the making of the necessary political, economic, and social reforms."

Even on the most liberal interpretation, those criteria had never been met and, instead of propping up a succession of corrupt and incompetent military juntas, we could with full justification have used the breach of the Eisenhower conditions as a basis for withdrawal. Yet, we remained mired in the Vietnamese swamp until the American people grew finally sick of it and Congress made their views effective.

What we should, I think, have learned from this tragic experience is that we should never commit American power to a limited war without carefully defining the conditions that must be met by the government we are assisting, and then holding to it. Thus, I do

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not at all agree with the view Mr. Kissinger is now urging: "When America commits itself to military action, there is no alternative to achieving our stated objective." That is, in my view, quite unwise counsel. No great captain in history has ever been faulted for executing a careful, tactical withdrawal when he found himself in an untenable situation and that rule should apply to great nations as well. Otherwise, we may experience other fiascos like Vietnam.

Not only should we carefully condition every military commitment in a war of limited relevance and objectives so as to reserve some maneuverability, but we should give far more thought than we have to the devising of tactics for changing course if we find ourselves in an impossible situation. We Americans have a great fondness for doctrines. Every President in recent years has had a doctrine named after him and I think it urgent that we develop a "Doctrine of Extrication." No matter how cautious our leaders may be, our country has no monopoly on wisdom and we shall inevitably make other mistakes, while conditions may unexpectedly change after we have engaged our forces. So, let us never again lock ourselves into a dragged out, costly, and losing conflict and throw away the key.

Of course, I do not suggest that extrication can ever be achieved without at least short-term costs. But our failure to disentangle America from Vietnam imposed major long-term costs from which we have still not fully recovered.

Nor am I implying that if we take steps at the outset to preserve some freedom of maneuver we should feel any freer in committing our power in a limited conflict. No such commitment should ever be made without the most intense consideration of all alternatives and a cautious study of the implications.

We should certainly avoid such a humiliating tragic comedy as our recent adventure in Lebanon. There the President unwisely committed our marines to a peacekeeping role for which American forces were manifestly unsuited. Then he carelessly changed their mission to the support of a minority faction in a civil war. Finally, after our marines had taken major casualties, he ordered the heavy guns of the *New Jersey* to bombard the Lebanese coast for little apparent purpose. Then, after declaring that America had vital interests in Lebanon, which involved not only our "strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean * * * but also the stability of the entire Middle East," he promptly withdrew our small force and tried to forget the whole incident. I cite that as a morality tale—a caricature of what I am advising.

But what then should be the criteria by which our leaders should commit America's military might to areas such as Vietnam where our own security is not directly threatened? One cannot answer that question except with abstractions that emphasize caution but provide little guidance in the making of concrete decisions.

Obviously we should be quite certain that the area involved is of strategic importance commensurate with the scale of the effort that may be required to defend it, but that says little since the answer depends on our overall strategy, which in turn implies a well-articulated conception as to what large objectives we wish to achieve and how we wish to use our resources. I do not detect the existence of any such strategy today.

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In addition, we should, in coming to the help of a threatened people, be sure that there is a well-defined country to defend, a national will to defend it, and a political structure through which that will is expressed, which means, in turn, a government that is neither corrupt nor oppressive. We should avoid the support of essentially reactionary regimes against revolutionary efforts which the world may regard as nationalist in motive, otherwise we may repel the younger and brighter and more progressive elements of the country—and of other countries that are watching.

That means that we must be certain there is a solid political base strong enough to support the weight of our support, since for us to try to create a base by pushing and pulling and bribing and cajoling native politicians into building an effective government may well be beyond our means.

Finally, before we inject our forces into a local conflict, let us study the history and other relevant disciplines that explain the passions and ethnic, religious, political, moral, and economic influences implicit in that conflict. Moreover, let us always be careful about inheriting other peoples' wars. We suffered in Vietnam because we appeared to our adversary as though we were picking up the French burden and we thus assumed many of the disabilities of the French while being too conceited to learn from their experience.

Let me add one final comment regarding a tendency now evident which I find particularly ominous—the tendency of those involved in Vietnam to look for scapegoats. Mr. Nixon has just written a book to prove that America would have won in Vietnam had Watergate not occurred and Congress only permitted him to send the bombers back whenever he chose and continued to vote subsidies for the South Vietnamese Government. Mr. Kissinger has suggested the same sentiment—although less categorically—in an article in the Los Angeles Times. Thus a new myth is assiduously being fabricated to explain our defeat.

The contention that Congress denied the country a victory in Vietnam is, I think, manifestly specious. It is either naive or disingenuous to contend that South Vietnam, which had proved unable to win the war with the help of 525,000 American troops, could have won it with its own forces alone had Congress only been patriotic enough to pour in more money and commit more American lives.

There are parallels in history for such exculpatory legends but they are not reassuring. The most apt perhaps is the myth invented by Gen. Erich von Ludendorf and extreme rightwing nationalist leaders in Germany in the 1920's, a myth that substantially contributed to the rise of Adolf Hitler. It was that the German army, which, with the failure of its March 1918 offensive, had been well and truly beaten in the field, was really winning the First World War when it was "stabbed in the back" by its politicians.

Another myth being perpetrated by the second guessers is that the United States could have prevailed had we only, in the winsome phrase of the late Gen. Curtis LeMay, "bombed North Vietnam back to the stone age." They do not seem to care that that would have made America a monster in the eyes of civilized mankind.

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An alternative charge popular in rightist circles is that we should have invaded North Vietnam. Again, its proponents seem indifferent to the fact that that would have cost thousands of American lives and left our country in occupation of a devastated country halfway around the world from America. Nor do they seem aware that intelligence assessments at the time gave reason to fear, as Mr. Clifford has suggested, that such action would have brought one or both of the great communist powers into the fighting.

North Vietnam lies on China's southern border and less than a decade before Americans had had to fight massive Chinese armies because our forces pushed too far into North Korea. Hadn't we had enough? As it was, our country often appeared as though it were saying to the Vietnamese, "we are going to save you from communism if we have to kill every one of you."

Today, in spite of the tragic consequences of Vietnam which have left their mark on almost all aspects of American life, I see little evidence that our leaders have learned much from that experience. Recently we have been hearing of a Reagan doctrine promising that the United States will support any state or group fighting for freedom against Communist domination anywhere in the world, a rhetorical replay of the Truman Doctrine and Kennedy's inaugural address. Meanwhile, the administration is still trying to dictate the political structures of small Central American countries, such as El Salvador and Nicaragua. It still confuses regional and local quarrels with the East-West struggle. It still thinks of military force as the prime arbiter of international arguments.

Yet I am not pessimistic. If our current leaders have learned little from America's tragic Vietnam experience, the American people have heard and are heeding the message. They do not envisage their country as the world's gendarme or even its nanny. And it seems to me they have given notice that if they are to support another major deployment of American forces, those in command will first have to show that the conflict at issue is of more than marginal relevance to our interests, that the regime we are seeking to support has deep roots throughout the countryside, that both the political and physical terrain are not hopelessly inhospitable, and that we can achieve limited objectives without committing disproportionately large forces or outraging world opinion. As is so often the case in a democracy, the people are proving wiser than their government.

Thank you.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, I want to thank both of you for some really illuminating testimony. You have established the standard of performance which it will not be easy for subsequent witnesses to match and which has rarely been met in the past in the testimony that has been delivered to our committee and for that, I am deeply grateful.

Let me begin, first, Mr. Clifford, by asking you this question: You indicated in your testimony that in your view, we should not commit American forces into combat situations abroad unless we believe that our national security is actually at stake and you suggest that if that criteria had been applied to the situation in Viet-

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nam, when we were originally involved, that we might have avoided the mistake of making the kind of commitment we made there.

Yet, at the same time, you also very persuasively advanced the proposition that at the time we sent our forces into Vietnam, we did so to a very significant extent because we somehow or other came to the conclusion that if the Communists triumphed in Vietnam, it would set in motion a series of falling dominoes which would ultimately produce a situation, as President Johnson put it, that would lead us to end up fighting in San Francisco and San Diego.

It seems to me that if we really believed that the fall of South Vietnam would seriously jeopardise our national security, then the real problem was that we misunderstood the extent to which a triumph on the part of the Communists in South Vietnam would set in motion a whole series of unwanted consequences.

But would you agree that if we really believed that the fall of South Vietnam would produce a situation where we would inevitably have to end up fighting in San Diego and San Francisco, that our national security was at stake? The problem was not with the criteria but with our analysis?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Yes; I believe that the major answer is as I suggested to you, that we had in our consciousness at the time the failure of Great Britain and France to oppose Hitler and the Third Reich. They let him move and get stronger and stronger and stronger, and that was in the consciousness of our leaders at the time.

It wasn't that we felt that the war in South Vietnam affected our national security in the beginning. It was that if we did not enter it, soon the Communists would control South Vietnam and Laos and Cambodia and Burma and they would move on out. After a while they would control the Philippines, where we had very valuable security installations, as you know. Then they would move farther out in the Pacific to Australia and New Zealand and always move closer and closer to the United States. Also, there is a very deep concern on the part of some other powers controlling the Pacific Basin and that entered into the deliberations I am sure.

Now, putting it another way, our leaders said we can either go in now and stop this Communist aggression or we can wait. Maybe in a year they will have all of Southeast Asia. Maybe in 2 years they will control the Pacific. Maybe if we wait 3 years, they may be in a position then, they may be in Hawaii by that time, and they would control that whole part of the world. So, it was the thought that by going in early, we would then prevent events from taking place that had a definite concern as far as our national security was involved.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, this is precisely my point. It seems to me, based on your analysis, that back in 1962, when we sent—I think that was the year—our forces into Vietnam for the first time. If, at a meeting of the National Security Council, either of you gentlemen or someone else, had said we have to ask whether the national security of the United States is at stake here before committing our forces, wouldn't the answer have been, "of course our national security is at stake, because if we don't send our troops in, the Government of South Vietnam will fall. If it falls, Laos and Burma will

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follow, then Australia and New Zealand, then the Philippines. Then they will be in Honolulu and pretty soon, we will be fighting in San Francisco. In order to avoid this, we have to prop up the Government of South Vietnam"?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Well, the fact is that is where the tragic mistake occurred, was in misevaluating the situation there as though it were a broad monolithic Communist plan to start in, then take over that part of the world and move into the Pacific. We know now that wasn't it at all.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, I fully agree with what you say, because I think it was from that faulty premise that our conclusions followed. In retrospect, you both—particularly you, Mr. Ball—were among the first to see that the analysis was mistaken. How do you explain the fact that we did misapply the lessons of Munich, as it were, to Vietnam? It always seemed to me that there was a fundamental difference between national aggression, which is what we faced from Nazi Germany, a country led by a man who appeared determined to expand his country's power, and when he wasn't stopped, continued pushing and pushing, and forces of national liberation, the success of these endeavers being more than anything else a function of indigenous factors and circumstances. One could easily envision a situation where the Communists would fail in Vietnam but succeed in Laos or Cambodia if conditions were riper for revolution. Or conversely, they could succeed in Vietnam but fail in Cambodia or Laos, if the conditions there were not ripe for revolution.

Why were we unable to see this fundamental distinction between the two situations?

Mr. BALL. My reply would be that there was considerable ignorance on the part of those making the decisions with regard to the French experience, the history of Indochina, and the ethnic differences that always existed between the three separate groups there. It was partly indifference, partly ignorance, but if it was indifference to the past, it stemmed at that time from our feeling that there was nothing we couldn't do. If the French had had trouble, well, that was because the French weren't fighting a noble war and the French were weak.

I don't for a moment suggest that we didn't have good motives, but I think that our exuberant feeling of strength was always a factor that misled us.

Mr. SOLARZ. What led us to the conclusion that if the Communists won in South Vietnam, the Communists would inevitably win in all of the other countries of Southeast Asia and eventually the Pacific?

Mr. BALL. Well, it was a hard thesis to prove or disprove. I was madly writing memorandums to the President telling him that the domino theory was misconceived. There was no reason to believe that if the Communist North Vietnam won in the South, that meant they were going to take over Southeast Asia. My own view was if we had to do any fighting, let's do it in Thailand or somewhere like that, because Vietnam, as I saw it, was the most inhospitable place from a physical and political point of view for us to commit our forces.

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Mr. SOLARZ. Well, when you advanced these arguments, what were the objections that were posed to them by the other people in the administration who obviously didn't accept your analyzation?

Mr. BALL. As I say, I could and did make the argument, but I couldn't prove it, and they couldn't prove it the other way. So they were quite prepared to disregard it.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Clifford.

Mr. CLIFFORD. May I make an addition to that? The view, then, was that the Soviet Union and Red China were close allies, and that this was a premeditated and preordained plan. And if South Vietnam fell, that was just the first step; that no one in the area could oppose the combined strength of the Soviet Union and Red China. And that is probably true.

If it had been the policy of the two great Communist powers to move throughout that area, I think unquestionably they could have done it. That was another misevaluation that our leaders made at the time because it was not a planned effort on their part to absorb all of Southeast Asia.

Mr. SOLARZ. I think the argument would have had a lot more validity if what we had confronted in Vietnam was an overt Soviet or Chinese invasion where one might then have said if they can get away with this, they will send their forces into the neighboring countries. But how would you apply the analysis you have both given in retrospect to the situation in Korea? I mean you could argue, it seems to me, that on one level that our policy in South Korea worked. It certainly benefited the South Korean people, who are infinitely better off today than they would have been if we had permitted Kim Il Sung to succeed in his efforts to unify the peninsula.

If on the other hand, if you say one of the major criteria for the introduction of the U.S. forces abroad has to be the national security of the United States, it isn't clear in retrospect that if President Truman hadn't made the decision to send U.S. forces to keep open the Pusan perimeter, and if we had permitted North Korea to succeed, that this would have significantly endangered the national security of the United States.

I don't see North Korea jumping off from South Korea to attack Japan. So, in retrospect, do you think, based on the criteria you have set, that we made a mistake in sending troops to South Korea where 50,000 lives were lost or if not? In what way does that modify the analysis you have put forward?

Mr. BALL. I supported the decision in South Korea and supported the war. And I opposed the decision in Vietnam from the very beginning because they were two quite different things. South Korea was invaded in a frontal invasion. It was not a matter of infiltration by the Vietcong. It was not a guerrilla-war-type matter.

South Korea had a government which had general support throughout the south. It was terrain in which we were much better equipped to fight than Vietnam. But beyond that there was much greater evidence that this was in response to a full concurrence by the Communist powers at that time, and that it was not simply a continuation of a war against the French which was basically an anticolonial war for which the Americans basically substituted themselves for the French.

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Mr. SOLARZ. I see those differences. But my question is if the fundamental criteria for the introduction of American forces into conflicts abroad is whether or not the national security of the United States is at stake. In retrospect, in what sense do you believe the national security of the United States was at stake in Korea when we made the decision to send our forces there?

Mr. BALL. There was also the impact of the timing. You remember that Korea was very soon after the Second World War; 19 what—49, I believe.

Mr. CLIFFORD. We went in in the spring of 1950.

Mr. BALL. 1950, all right. We were in the process of trying to organize the West against the encroachment of the Soviet Union. It was a period where something had to be done to demonstrate, I think, America's capacity and willingness to resist further aggression.

Now that was not the case in Vietnam. By the time of Vietnam, we had already made that demonstration; so as far as our allies were concerned they were assured. From the point of view of our allies, what happened in Vietnam was something that the French shrugged their shoulders about. They had tried it, and failed, and they didn't think we would do any better.

The British didn't regard it as a major importance. Korea was a very different affair. Although I think General MacArthur exaggerated when he said that Korea was a pistol pointed at Japan, our relations with the Japanese were still in a very formative, tenuous state, and something had to be done to demonstrate American will and American willingness to stay in the area.

Maybe we needed Korea first, but we didn't need Vietnam second. I mean we had made the demonstration.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Clifford, was there anything you would like to add to that analysis?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Only the fact that I believe Korea was part of our country's policy, which I believe was a very sound policy of demonstrating to the world that we would stand up to communism at the conclusion of the Second World War. We did it in Europe. We talked about the Marshall plan, NATO, Truman doctrine. The Communists had occupied North Korea; we had occupied South Korea.

I think it was part of that overall program, were we going to stand up to them at that time, help Europe, help Korea withstand the aggression of the Communists? Or were we going to default? I think it was a wise decision, and I think it had a very real impact. So that one must broaden, possibly, what we are talking about to those issues in which we approached after the Second World War the fact that the world was waiting to see whether we were going to support freedom in the world or whether we were going to capitulate and let the Communists take over.

Mr. BALL. Let me just add to that, if I may, that from the point of view of our Western allies. A great deal of attention was focused on them at that time because we were facing the problem of the rearmament of Germany. We were facing the problem of trying to help Europe pull itself together. From the point of view of our Western allies Korea was one thing, and Vietnam was quite another.

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They regarded the Vietnam war as a civil war. They didn't regard it as a Chinese encroachment. But I think they saw clearly that Korea was.

Mr. CLIFFORD. Yes.

Mr. SOLARZ. Let me ask one final question for the time being, then I will yield to my colleagues. As a general proposition, in Third World countries where friendly countries are the victims of aggression or insurrection, and where we believe we have an interest in maintaining those governments in power, but where we also believe our interests are not so great as to justify the commitment of American forces to protect those governments, do you think we should be willing to provide them military assistance in order to fend off the internal or external aggression against them?

Do you think that almost inevitably, given the nature of our political system, that once we begin to provide military assistance the political pressures to send in American forces become irresistible? And that, therefore, unless we believe in advance that it is a situation worthy of sending American troops into, that we shouldn't employ limited amounts of military resistance because if that doesn't work, we will end up sending the American troops?

Or do we have the political capacity and maturity to make a distinction between a willingness to help a country help itself and then if that doesn't work, to step back and say if they can't do it, we can't do it for them by sending American troops?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would certainly hope that we had reached that mature point in our deliberations and in our policymaking process. I believe one must be careful about generalizing as to how we do it. I think each situation rests upon its own merits. I can see where from time to time it is important to extend military aid to a particular country. It helps aid in that particular situation, helps protect freedom there. That doesn't mean in any circumstance we have to commit ourselves to later send combat troops.

There is a sharp line of distinction there. I think it is sharper now. We have made a number of mistakes in the past. I remember one time a great many years ago we were making noises as though we were going to help Hungary. And I believe it to a great extent led Hungary to feel that—with our support, that they could stem Soviet control. Well, it was a cruel, cruel hoax. We had no way to be able to extend the kind of military aid to Hungary that would have permitted it to remain free.

We have Afghanistan. I know of no way, really, that the United States could go free Afghanistan from the attack that is taking place. We feel strongly about them, and we are sympathetic and we can help them. I stretch the analogy to Central America. I am deeply concerned about what is going on there in Central America.

What you have said and wisely said, that one can so easily lead to the other, we are sending munitions, and arms, and advisers. And then we have very nearby, if I remember the exact number, 6,000 American troops. And it wouldn't take much of a spark to ignite that situation and have our people involved. I would be much more comfortable if we got our troops out of there; pulled them out so that it doesn't appear as though they are there and ready to become involved in combat.

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I am concerned about the fleet that we have down there. There are still naval vessels. One of them could be sunk. We went into a war one time, 85 years ago, because the battleship, *Maine*, was sunk. When that happens, and your vessel is there, you cannot say, well, we are awfully sorry it happened. You move into it, and then take some part in it.

I would hope that that decision is one that is very carefully observed. I am not sure that it has been as lately and as sharply observed as I would like it to be.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Ball, do you want to comment on the question?

Mr. BALL. Well, I would certainly hope that we have achieved the kind of maturity which you suggest, Mr. Chairman. We have a number of means of persuasion if we want to use them. We have, in the Latin American situation, other nations in the area who are eager to be helpful, because their interests, as they see it, are much more engaged than ours are.

But I don't think that we are using them properly. We say we are encouraging them, but every time they come up with any kind of solution we say, no, we don't like it. So it seems to me we have not used that mechanism nearly enough.

For us to be assisting the revolutionaries fighting a government with which we have normal diplomatic relations is one of the most fantastic distortions I can imagine. I think we are violating almost every tenet of international policy in the way we have behaved in Nicaragua. We mine harbors, teach the malodorous arts of assassination, reject the world court. We line up a substantial number of American troops next door. And we continue harassment.

We still have formal diplomatic relations with Nicaragua. How one justifies such conduct under international law, I don't understand. One of the things that bothers me is that, while obviously we can't live strictly according to the tenets of international law, over the past few years we have disregarded practically all the tenets, not only there, but elsewhere.

I find this discouraging because a democracy should abide by rules. And if we don't abide by the rules, I think the whole genius of the American system is called into question.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you.

Mr. Leach.

Mr. LEACH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am reminded, Secretary Clifford, when you talked about the difficulty our naval vessels might get us into, that in, I think, 1807, Thomas Jefferson once wrote a letter in which he lamented that our country would be better off without any American merchant marine because inevitably it would get us into a conflict. This happened in 1812 and would suggest lets just sink it. But I don't think you would go to the point of saying we should sink all our battleships. In any regard, Secretary Ball, I was impressed with your very original observation that we ought to have a doctrine of extrication which might be kind of a doctrine of reverse hubris. I am just wondering if you could put a little meat on that. What do you mean by that? Is a doctrine of extrication simply one where we are willing to apply in foreign policy, on a continuous basis, a zero-sum analysis like we allegedly are supposed to do in economic policy, that is, reviewing continually whether a particular policy is in our best inter-

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est, and then reassessing that policy at all moments in time? Or is it a procedural concert where we are to set in place formal procedures for reversing gear?

Mr. BALL. I think it is a little bit of both. At the outset, it means we never commit American force even in a limited way without very, very explicit conditions which set the terms under which we are prepared to assist. We don't simply say we will save you, don't worry. You can relax no matter what you do. And then we abide by them and we keep looking at them and trying to determine whether those conditions are being met.

If they aren't being met, then we inform the government. Now if we had informed one of the succession of military juntas which were running South Vietnam in Saigon during that period, that there were certain conditions which had to be met in order for us to continue, I think probably they would have disintegrated at that time and tried to make a deal with the north. And we would have found a way of getting out, not particularly in a manner that was very pretty, but we would have fulfilled our obligation because we had done everything we could, but they had not fulfilled their obligation. So that is the first point.

We had those conditions. They were laid down, but we ignored them. We didn't try to live up to them. As a matter of fact during that period, I once enlisted Dean Acheson and Lloyd Cutler, who were two old friends, to come into the Department and work out a series of proposals which should be made to the Saigon government with the understanding that if the Saigon government was not prepared to accept them and to implement them, then we were going to go through a period of reconsideration.

But that was blocked because of the feeling that it would upset the Saigon government. That was exactly the purpose of it, of course. The second thing is that I agree entirely that there ought to be—and it doesn't have to be all that formal—but there ought to be a procedure for us to look at the situation periodically and at the same time avoid the kind of overblown rhetoric that ties us into a corner and denies us a way out.

Now, as I mentioned to you, the dilemma of a democratic government is that the people are prepared to fight to the death if they are convinced that their nation is in jeopardy or even that principles are in jeopardy. But in order to elevate a war, which is frankly, one of limited or tangential effect on our national interest to a war which is vital to our national interest, the President has to expand the rhetoric.

And that tends to get everything out of focus and make any kind of extrication impossible. I think this is a subject that deserves a great deal more study than it has received. How does a great nation retain some maneuverability once it makes a decision? A situation could change materially, but we would still be stuck with the same commitments, if we are not very careful. This, I think, is something I would commend for the committee to study. How can our Nation limit its commitments and still fulfill its obligations.

Mr. LEACH. As we look at the Vietnam war, I think it is pretty hard not to conclude that it was the Kennedy and Johnson administrations that really got us deeply involved in what might be described as a doctrine of wrongheadedness. But an aspect of the

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Nixon administration which I think is particularly interesting and what which be described as a doctrine of cynicism comes from Henry Kissinger's book in which there is a most remarkable sentence that just made me sit bolt upright. He said in his book that before coming to power, in his talks with Nixon before he took on the job of the NSC Director—implying in kind of a postassessment way that this was going to be the crucial policymaking position—we decided to end the war.

And what strikes one is the reasonableness of that judgment. But then, if you decide to end the war by escalating the conflict, what you have really got is total cynicism and the total involvement of pride rather than national interest. When you talk about a doctrine of extrication, it strikes me that any Presidency coming into power, particularly that of a new political party in 1969, might reasonably have made the assumption. Let's end the war.

By the same token, you have got to have a strategy to implement that makes sense. If Nixon and Kissinger really did intend, prior to assuming the Presidency, to end the war, it is rather extraordinary what transformed between 1969 and 1971 or 1972. Would you comment on that, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. CLIFFORD. We had a long and bitter experience with the war. Through the years of the Johnson administration there wasn't a day that he and those around him didn't struggle with it. Finally, in 1968 he made some decisions much more apparent to us than to the public that he no longer expected to gain military victory. That was one of the reasons that he resigned; one of the reasons that he refused to send more men back.

So when Mr. Nixon was elected in November of that year and Mr. Kissinger called me and said he was interviewing different people with reference to what we had been through, I had three separate meetings with him. One night we had dinner and talked until after midnight. And I told him all that we had been through, the conclusions that we had reached. And I said that Mr. Nixon could become a national hero. He could assure his place in American history if within 30 days after being elected President he would go to the people on a nationwide hookup and say, "My major obligation and major goal is to withdraw from Vietnam."

We went through the whole history, all of the different reasoning processes through which we had gone. And at that last—end of the third meeting, he said, "Would you be willing to come over and make this same presentation to President Nixon?" And I said I would eagerly look forward to that opportunity. Well, he said, "I will call you." The call never came.

The fact is that I later learned that at no time was attention given in those early days to Mr. Nixon announcing he was going to end the war. That didn't seem to be in their consciousness at all. They went right on. An element came in there that I have never understood. They began to talk at the very beginning, almost, and then the emphasis became even greater later on, on the credibility of the United States.

You will all remember that Mr. Nixon made a speech one time in which he said if we don't carry through there in Vietnam, we will be regarded as a pitiful, helpless giant. I have no idea what in the world he was talking about. The United States has met its

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international obligations better than perhaps any nation in the world. When we came up in World War I and saved freedom in the world and again in World War II, and in the Korean war and in any number of other situations. Our continued participation has brought the United States vigorously into foreign policy leadership in the 20th century.

To say that if we didn't fight out there in Southeast Asia and see our way through this situation, that our credibility would be affected all over the world, I say I am totally unable to understand. The fact is the world had exactly the opposite reaction. As Secretary of Defense, I attended a number of meetings of foreign ministers. After we got to know each other, one by one, almost without exception, they would steer me off in a corner some place and say, "I would like to know, for my own private information, Mr. Clifford, why is the United States in Vietnam."

And I would say, well, because we came to the aid of a nation, a free nation, we wanted to preserve freedom in South Vietnam. We felt that we should do it. They said, "Well, I know all that. But now you have deepened the port there in Saigon. You have got a 40-foot depth in that port. And do you have a feeling that the economic production of that area will be important at some time?"

One of them said he had heard that there were some very large petroleum structures in the China Sea. He wanted to know if possibly that was involved, they could not believe that we were there for the reason that we gave. They were sure there was some other reason, because it was absolutely insane to them that we were there for the stated purpose. They were sure there was something.

There was oil there, they suggested. There was commerce there. There was an area in which we were preparing later on. And yet, throughout that 4 years, this constant argument, we must stay there. We must see it through or our credibility will be adversely affected. Now call it cynicism; call it whatever you want. But I know only that Nixon ignored the lessons that we had learned. We did our best to get it over to them. Yet, in the next 4 years, as Mr. Ball said, we lost 20,000 more men in Vietnam.

And I think it was $50 to $60—$80 billion more of our Treasury that we expended. I think it should not have happened. I think it should not have happened when we went in there. That was a misevaluation. But I think they ignored our experience and made another misevaluation.

Mr. LEACH. Well, I am reminded of when I was in graduate school in Great Britain. The most often quoted comment to me, in any comment about Vietnam, was the 1954 Eisenhower quote, taken largely out of context, which said in effect that Vietnam was vital to U.S. security because of the tungsten and tin.

I always wondered to myself what world they were living in. But what they were doing was reflecting exactly what your ministers were reflecting. They were wondering wasn't there a real reason to be there that was above the principles we had established. It has always struck me that in Vietnam we had what might be described as less a domino theory of government toppling, than a domino theory of decisionmaking in Washington. Once you had a small decision that led to a larger decison which led to a still larger decision, there was no ability to reassess—coming back to your extrica-

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tion doctrine—at each moment in time. And that what you really had was a doctrine of pride whereby no one could admit prior error. Does it strike you that way? Was that a problem within the executive? Were there efforts made to reassess, point by point, where we were going and whether we should reverse gear?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I cannot remember any specific instance in which the President said, now, let's reevaluate—until the situation that existed after Tet. Then he created a committee and asked that we completely reevaluate. Up until then, the momentum of our presence continued. Whereas, we have been talking about what we consider to be a political miscalculation, there was equally a military miscalculation.

When the military was told that we were going to go in there and save South Vietnam, I think it felt that it was not going to be a particularly difficult task. Here were a lot of little people running around in black pajamas in North Vietnam, and here we came in, the greatest nation in the world, with the most enormous firepower and with bombing that could wipe them out. And that was another reason that I think that perhaps the decision to go in was not too difficult, because the effort wasn't going to take very long, and the whole matter would be over.

The military made a serious strategic miscalculation. I think it was fighting our past wars. And that didn't go on in Vietnam at all. I remember one time a plan was conceived and arrived at, that we were going to have a sweep through the Ashaw Valley, which would break the backbone of the enemy strength. We had 50,000 troops to move through the Ashaw Valley. We moved through it, it took 2 weeks.

We may have killed less than 200 of the enemy with this enormous sweep that we went through. I remember one of the generals at the time saying, "God dammit, they wouldn't come out and fight."

I thought, I am sure that is what the British general back in the Revolutionary War said when the Americans were waiting with their squirrel guns and picking them off. Then he would report back and he would say, I venture, "God damn them. They wouldn't come out and fight."

We dropped more tonnage of bombs in Vietnam than was dropped in the entire Second World War. And after all that period of time, they were still fighting, still fighting. I think we never did find a way. We tried everything. We, one time, were going to have an electronic barrier between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. That didn't come off. We tried to defoliate the area. And that didn't work. So there was a very serious military misconception of what existed there.

My hope would be that we have learned something important from that.

Mr. BALL. May I just add a word, Mr. Congressman?

Mr. LEACH. Of course.

Mr. BALL. On the question you raised, in August, September, it was 1964, before we had even started bombing, right after the Gulf of Tonkin situation, I sent my colleagues a 67-page analysis challenging every assumption of the war in Vietnam. And I didn't send

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it to the President immediately because he was in the middle of a campaign, but in January, I gave it to the President also.

I met with my colleagues, Secretary Rusk, MacNamara, McGeorge Bundy for a full Saturday afternoon. I found no sympathy on their side with a challenge of that kind. They seemed to think that, while the points I was making might have some validity, that we were moving forward and we couldn't back up because it was too difficult and the costs would be too great.

But President Johnson was given this memorandum in early 1965. It was only the first of, I think, eight memorandums that I sent all together during this period saying let's cut our losses; let's get out; this war is getting out of control, and we are not going to win.

I want to record the fact that the President was deeply troubled by what I wrote; rather than dismissing my arguments, he insisted on having a full-dress discussion. I think you were there on at least one or two occasions, Clark, and the President was much more troubled, as far as I could see, than his advisors, nor was there ever an occasion that he didn't thank me for disagreeing with him.

In other words, there was on his part a very real attempt, I think, to try to examine the predicament. At the same time, there was a feeling that things had gone too far. Now, when I mention the fact that both President Johnson and President Nixon used exactly the same phrase, "I will not be the first President to lose a war"; that deserves some thought, because what it indicates is that there was a personal predicament as well as national predicament. From Johnson's own point of view, how could he survive politically if we withdrew or how could he survive in history?

I am not saying that was abnormal. I think it was quite normal. It is an idea any President would have, but there are factors that make explanation very difficult including domestic politics and the way in which any individual who participates in that decision is going to look in the history books. I only add this because I think that it would be unwise not to take account of it.

Mr. LEACH. Well, I think one can assess this administration as being one for one. We won in Grenada and we may have lost in Lebanon.

Let me just——

Mr. BALL. Have you ever considered, Mr. Congressman, what would have happened if the Grenadians had won?

Mr. LEACH. Well, there is the old story of an Israeli from back in the early 1960's to the effect that they had an economic problem and the man stands up and says, "Well, let's declare war on the United States and 2 days later raise the white flag." Then someone else stands up and says, "Well, what if we win?"

I think it's a little more likely in the other circumstance than this one. It's quite clear we did not assess, forgetting the military victory, the ramifications until after the fact. I think we are all extraordinarily relieved that in Grenada it appears there has been an appreciation to some extent for the American involvement, but that was not very carefully understood I think in advance, which is rather extraordinary.

Coming back to Vietnam and historical analogies, it is very easy to suggest that World War II was not the appropriate practical

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analogy for involvement in Vietnam and that perhaps Korea was not. But, at the time, particularly with President Kennedy, there was a great deal of discussion not of these analogies, but (*A*) of the Malaysian analogy with the British and (*B*) of the Philippine analogy with General Lansdale.

I think one of the extraordinary questions we have to ask, particularly as President Kennedy was so involved in the early days with the establishment of upgrading special forces, is, "Why is it that the Philippine analogy and Malaysian analogy didn't fit the Vietnamese situation?" And has there been a reassessment in either of your minds on that particular issue?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would offer a first shot at it. I am sure Mr. Ball would have something to add. In order for us to look back into the state of mind that existed in the early 1960's, you have to remember that we had just been through this world struggle, and to a certain extent were still in it. Communism versus democracy.

And now communism, after making an effort in Western Europe, communism after making efforts in Korea, now communism there again was engaged in a major march to take over a whole new part of the globe. And it was that general feeling that got us in.

You could call it that or you could call it the domino theory or whatever it is. But that was the concept. I have never had the feeling, have never felt that there was a particular interpretation that that factor was present either in the Philippines situation as it developed, or in the Malaysian difficulty as it developed.

I think they were looked upon as isolated problems rather than falling with the general pattern of this worldwide Communist aggression.

Mr. BALL. I don't think I would add anything to that. I think that is quite right.

Mr. LEACH. Let me just conclude by saying, Secretary Ball, that you in 1964 and, I guess, Secretary Clifford in 1968 indicated very profound concern about the war.

If we change branches of the Government, it's rather extraordinary that even though Congress is supposed to be the repository of varied opinions and the executive is supposed to be the repository of a unified opinion, how little—not how much, but how little—dissent there was in this body.

As a graduate student, I was a staff aide up here in 1965 and anyone that dissented a little said at that time, "I am concerned, but the Executive has more knowledge and more facts." The Members of Congress with concerns were totally unwilling to take a public stand.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I missed that.

Mr. LEACH. They were totally unwilling to take a public stand. As we go back, it is amazing how much people try to claim they took a stand and didn't, whether it be on the Gulf of Tonkin, or whether it be efforts to date back references to concerns. It is astonishing to me that out of 535 Members of the U.S. Congress that there were virtually none at the appropriate time periods who indicated concern.

I think it would be very interesting at some point in time, and maybe we could do so if we have a second round of questions, to

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ask you about your perception of Congress and its role during this process.

Finally, let me just conclude with one last notion. I would hope, Secretary Ball, that you would find time at some point to flesh out in an article or paper of some nature your "Doctrine of Extrication." I think it would be of very great interest to this country at this time perhaps.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I might make just one more short comment.

Mr. SOLARZ. Please.

Mr. CLIFFORD. Two points. In order that I be as well informed as possible about the opposite view of what we are discussing, I read Mr. Nixon's book. So you will understand the background from which I speak.

He falsely says that peace was achieved in Vietnam, and that then when the peace broke down, which was the fault of others than his administration, that then we could very easily have proceeded to conclude the conflict if it had not been forthcoming. So, I suggest to you that when you look at the responsibility of Congress, you may take great comfort from the fact that it was the Congress that ended our participation in the war in Vietnam.

We did not get it from the Nixon administration. We did not get it from the Ford administration. It was only 2 or 3 weeks before you finally cut off funds for Vietnam that President Ford asked for an additional $720 million. I happen to remember the exact figure.

You not only turned that request down, but you stopped all further expenditures in Vietnam. And that ended our participation. I must say I extend the greatest credit to the Congress for finally stepping up and taking that position.

Mr. LEACH. At the risk of making a partisan observation, I would only say you Democrats gave us a war, then you gave us a democratic Congress to stop the war.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, I suspect that one legacy of the war in Vietnam is that Congress will never as supinely acquiesce to American involvements abroad as it did in Vietnam.

I think the days for better or worse when Presidents can count on a congressional consensus for pretty much anything they do are irreconcilably behind us.

Mr. Torricelli.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Thank you.

One of the conclusions I thought might be reached from Mr. Leach's comments concerning the belief that Presidents had more information or more knowing, had access we didn't have and understanding we didn't have, is the enormous debt we owe to the Reagan administration. Clearly no one believes that about President Reagan.

He has cured the entire Nation of that misconception about the Presidency. For that we are forever in his debt. I think it is important, in thinking about the Vietnam war, to recognize some of the continuing costs. We are not without the legacies. It is still an important problem in the exercise of our foreign policy.

As I look at the problems of American policy in Europe in particular, and the frustrations we all have about why there is not a continuing appreciation or debt to the United States and the role we played, I am reminded of Vietnam. As we think of the tenden-

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cies of a new generation in Europe to think of the United States in similar terms to the Soviet Union, to compare American activities in Vietnam with those of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, I am reminded of Vietnam.

I wondered if either or both of you could comment on how deep those continuing costs really are in the exercise of American foreign policy, with a new generation, of people in Europe and the nations in the developing world who now see us differently than we see ourselves and who now see us differently than they saw us before Vietnam.

Mr. BALL. Well, I might just say a word on that. I think that the observation you make is a very important one. The perception of the United States in Europe was enormously damaged by Vietnam on two counts.

First because of the appearance that we lack compassion. We engaged in wholesale killing by dropping a heavy weight of bombs on a primitive economy which really meant that we were using bombs indiscriminately on the countryside. That shocked a number of our friends in Europe and elsewhere.

But, second, our effort was so disproportionate to our interests that our friends began to question how wise we were. It is not enough for a leader to be strong and to be rich, but a leader has to show that he is intelligent and rational and puts things in the proper perspective. In the minds of our allies, our friends, we seemed to be displaying more of a neurosis than a stable judgment because we stayed in for 10 years in a situation where there seemed to be no end and where everybody else around the world had concluded we weren't going to win anyway.

So that I think those are some of the costs. Of course, there are major costs on the domestic front as well. The budget is badly imbalanced and we had a terrible spell of inflation, all of that had its roots in the Vietnam experience.

And there is also a failure of respect for authority in the minds of a whole generation and the tragedy that happened to American education during the 1960's, all of these are costs and we are still paying them.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I might add a vignette to that that I think helps dramatize it. Toward the end of October 1972 Mr. Kissinger had returned from Vietnam and went on a nationwide television program one morning and announced that peace was at hand in Vietnam.

It turned out later after November 5 or 6, election day, that there wasn't any peace in Vietnam. And then we started that December bombing. That carpet bombing that went through Saigon. We bombed the hospital at that time, destroyed a hospital in Saigon. A few weeks after that I was in Norway on business——

Mr. TORRICELLI. For the record you mean Hanoi.

Mr. CLIFFORD. What did I say? Excuse me, I misspoke. I meant to say Hanoi. I was in Norway on business and I was having lunch with a member of the Norwegian cabinet who previously had been in their defense department years before, and I'd gotten to know. He made a comment that remains in my mind today. He said, "You know, we in this country have an enormous respect for the United States for all it has stood for, the high moral and ethical

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concept, its devotion to freedom. It has been a beacon light in the world."

But he said, "Today the people of Norway feel that America has lost its way. We see now this great nation, the most powerful in the world, bombing a small backward southeast nation into just almost complete rubble." And he said, "We don't understand it."

Mr. TORRICELLI. That really illustrates the point that I wanted to make. The enormous reservoir of goodwill that America built during and after the Second World War was drained to such a large extent in the minds of so many for the sake of Vietnam.

Mr. CLIFFORD. Yes.

Mr. TORRICELLI. I wonder, Mr. Clifford, if you could comment on something that I was giving a lot of thought to recently, the question of conscription in the United States. Would opposition to the war in Vietnam in your opinion and from the perspective you had come as quickly, as strongly, as completely, if we had not been fueling the war in Vietnam with conscriptees, if we had not had a draft? If this had been a voluntary force, in the mid- and late-1960's?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I suppose that it has led to a much closer evaluation of what took place. There is the feeling in different groups here in the country with which you are very familiar, that it was the young men from our less fortunate strata of our society, both from an economic and from an ethnic standpoint, who really fought the war and who paid the greatest price for it.

I am not sure I am close enough to it. I know only that I believe our country should have the draft. I believe that it could be handled in different ways, that we should have our young people give 1 year to their country between high school and college.

There might be a number who would object to going into the service, but they could be put into some other kind of related activity. Many, however, would be glad to go into the service because of the rewards that would come later on from that standpoint.

Mr. TORRICELLI. At this point I should make an editorial comment to note that Senator Hart has exactly such legislation in the Senate and that I have exactly such legislation in the House and your endorsement is gratefully received.

Mr. CLIFFORD. Oh, well, that is very interesting.

Mr. TORRICELLI. I feel very strongly about it.

Mr. BALL. May I also add my endorsement?

Mr. TORRICELLI. Yes.

Mr. BALL. I entirely agree, I think we are making a great mistake not to have national service in this country.

Mr. TORRICELLI. I think, for all of the reasons I suspect Mr. Clifford was getting at and that you probably share, that stands out about the Vietnam experience is that the difference between 1964 and 1965, and public support for the war in 1968 and 1969 when support dropped. In addition to the waning military fortunes, all of a sudden we started calling much deeper down into the American population. Among those we called on to sacrifice.

It was beyond the poor and the blacks, it was to the middle class and the white. That started to change, too. And with it evaporated some support at that turning point in the war.

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Let me go, Mr. Ball, to a very different point if I could. This country all through the Vietnam experience was not without its critics, even at early times. We certainly were not without people who had knowledge of the cultures of southeast Asia, of its politics and history, even of some of the personalities.

No one could be caught on a college campus—as I was at the time—without having professors of every type and background who would offer a different set of experiences, knowledge, and study. Where was that in the U.S. Government?

Is there a systematic problem that that depth of knowledge and experiences, of the best corporations, the biggest unions, the best scholars, doesn't reach decisionmakers in the United States? Or was it reaching and just not being heard?

Mr. BALL. During this period I used to repeatedly ask what I always referred to as the giraffe question. The giraffe question stemmed from an incident where a father took his small son to a zoo, and he was pointing out the animals to his son. And he pointed to a very large animal that was in a field nearby and said, "That is a giraffe," to which his son replied, "Why?"

Now what we were doing in Vietnam was asking only one question, "How?" How can we apply our resources to achieve our objective? I think that I was for a very long time the only one who ever asked the giraffe question, "Why?" But this is part of the problem that one encounters with very busy people who feel a great sense of urgency now that we have gotten into something to have it succeed, who spend enormous amounts of time, even though they have themselves broad backgrounds, concentrating on the single question, "How."

And I think that all of the information about the French experience, about the ethnic history of the area, all of these things which were quite relevant, they were largely relevant to the question, "Why."

And it was so hard to get anyone to focus on this because they tended to say, "Look, we can't look at that now. We have made a decision. We are in this. Let's get on with it."

Mr. TORRICELLI. Shouldn't the White House, State Department, and defense structure be such that that information is being provided by knowledgeable people in different areas of the world, whether it is being sought or not, and that our best talent is information in decisionmaking in the country? The best thing on Vietnam was being provided to college students in the 1960's, not to the President of the United States.

Now it could be that the President of the United States wasn't asking, but it is also an error in the system that it wasn't provided.

Mr. BALL. Part of it was a certain disdain for the French experience which was the most relevant because they just had been through this thing in an agonizing way and they had lost. But here again, there was a kind of sense, "hubris" is too strong a word, but sense of American superiority and feeling we could do anything. If the French hadn't succeeded well, they were the French. What will we do ourselves? I discussed this issue with General De Gaulle during the period. He said, "You Americans have many more resources than we have. You can stay there longer than we could,

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but in the end, you're making a great mistake and you are going to lose."

But nobody was prepared to listen to that kind of talk simply because they couldn't face the fact that this was a mistake and that we were in something where we couldn't win. It was partly, as I suggest, the quantitative approach; because we had so many resources and the other side had so few we had to win.

Mr. CLIFFORD. We haven't discussed this before and I am not sure I am going to say it accurately. There is another factor in this country that I observe from time to time—I will call it the "jingoistic factor." There is something about getting involved in a conflict that seems to have some appeal to the American people.

When we got involved in Vietnam, there were a lot of patriotic speeches made and our armies were going to prevail, and it turned out, however, to be a very bitter experience, but it didn't seem to remove this other factor.

You remember the incident of the *Mayaguez*, the ship that was out in Southeast Asia someplace and the enemy apprehended it—it was an American ship—and so we sent some marines out to retake it. We had already gotten it back before the marines got there and we lost a number of marines. But that still didn't seem to make any difference. The American people applauded that particular incident because we had sent our forces there. I found it surprising the extent of the applause that went up over Grenada.

Mr. TORRICELLI. That reminds me, as a part of something that I didn't hear in both of your testimonies, which I admired greatly—which were the domestic political components, the driving domestic political components ese decisions? Vietnam had a lot more to do with those "who lost China" domestic political argument, in my judgment, than it had to do with foreign policy considerations.

Grenada had a lot more to do with the political reaction to Castro.

Nicaragua has a lot more to do with domestic political reaction to what is perceived as weakness by the Carter administration. Foreign policy considerations often seem secondary in making these decisions.

Mr. BALL. Let me recount one small incident that to some extent I think bears out what you say.

Mr. Johnson, at the height of the problems on the campuses, when the campuses were really in flames, said to me, when we were discussing the second bombing pause, that he was afraid that if we got locked into the pause and nothing happened the pressures would be almost overwhelming to go forward and enlarge the war. He said, "What you don't understand is that what those kids on the campuses don't really make any difference, they don't terrify me. What really terrifies me is the rightwing reaction if we have a pause and nothing happens. That is the great beast and that is what I have to live with all the time."

Mr. TORRICELLI. You know, finally you both in your presentations hinted at something for which I see a rising constituency for in this country. I noticed it in Mr. Lugar's review of American foreign policy hearings in the Senate, which sets new rules of behavior between the United States and the Soviet Union, and clearly defines those areas that are of real national security interest.

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Even on a geographical level, we say, this is the kind of behavior that is not acceptable, these are the areas of real security. There is nothing more dangerous in our relationship with other nations, particularly with the Soviet Union, than for both to have different ideas and concepts about what the other considers to be important territory, and that that is exactly where we are in our relations now. I sense that you both agree with at least part of that sentiment.

Mr. BALL. Of course, there is the historic incident which bothered a great many people. Dean Acheson's drawing of a line which excluded Korea from our defense perimeter.

Mr. CLIFFORD. He made a speech at the Press Club——

Mr. BALL. A great many people afterward said the reason that the Communists pulled themselves together and attacked was because this Korea had been placed outside our defense perimeter as we had defined it, and therefore, it was fair game.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank both witnesses personally. I thought it was tremendous testimony and it has been useful for me.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, thank you.

This has been extraordinarily valuable and I would like to continue the hearing. We have a vote in progress on the floor. I realize you gentlemen have both been here for some time, but with your forebearance, and if you are willing, I would like to recess the committee for 10 minutes and we will vote and come back, if that is acceptable to you.

Without seeming objection then, we will adjourn for 10 minutes.

[A short recess was taken.]

Mr. SOLARZ. The subcommittee will resume.

Thank you very much for your patience in waiting for me.

By the time we had already gotten deeply involved in Vietnam, with substantial numbers of American troops, to what extent did our determination to stay the course result from our view that if South Vietnam fell, that the rest of the dominoes would fall, and to what extent did our determination to stay the course depend on our feeling that if we were to withdraw, our credibility would be diminished or devastated? Obviously both were factors, but can you assign any relative weight to each?

Mr. BALL. Well, I would offer the assessment that the question of credibility had become 10 times as important as the domino theory at this point.

Mr. SOLARZ. At that stage?

Mr. BALL. Yes, sir.

Mr. SOLARZ. Whereas, initially it was all the domino theory?

Mr. BALL. I think it had a considerable effect, but I think by then, it was pretty well ignored.

What do you think?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I believe the issue is dramatized by the question that is oftentimes asked—what do you think our participation in the war would have been had President Kennedy lived? It is a very interesting question. Nobody can answer it very accurately. I have the feeling that President Kennedy was a pragmatist and that the analysis to which he would have subjected the war would have been somewhat different than that used by President Lyndon John-

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son. I have a feeling to some extent that President Kennedy would have disassociated himself from all of the emotional factors surrounding the war to a greater extent than President Johnson did.

So that it is true, as Mr. Ball says, that the question of our credibility, our staying power entered into it, but as a matter of fact it should not have at all. But as soon as we found out that we had been guilty of a miscalculation we should have closed up, cut our losses and gotten out. That is why it was suggested so strongly to the Nixon administration, when it came in, because they could say, we bear no responsibility for what happened up to this point, it has been wrong, and we are going to get out, and they could have done it. The credibility issue apparently consumed them and why, I have never understood.

Mr. SOLARZ. Let me ask you whether you think it would be in our interest to send American troops to a number of different countries if a situation should develop where the governments of those countries looked like they were about to go under, not as a result of external invasions but as a result of domestic insurrection led by Communist forces?

First, El Salvador. If it appears at some point in the next few years that the government there is about to go under and the only way to prevent the guerrillas from winning would be to send U.S. troops, would you think it would be in our interest to do so? If so, why? If not, why not?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would not.

Mr. BALL. I certainly would not. We can't go on trying to insist that every government around the world has to have a free enterprise system. The fact that a few wretched guerrillas are imposing their will on the country, is really of no particular interest to us.

Mr. SOLARZ. Now, what about the Philippines? We have a situation here where the New Peoples Army, which is a Communist-dominated group, is gaining momentum. It is conceivable by the end of the decade or into the early 1990's, if present trends continue, that they might be able to take power there. Obviously, we do have important strategic interests at stake in the Philippines. If it looked like the only way to prevent the NPA from winning was to send American troops, would you be for it or against it?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would be opposed to it as of now. I cannot very well transport myself to 1 year or 2 or 3 years from now. The world conditions might have changed, the situation in the Pacific might have changed. I would not interfere with what is going on within the Philippines. I have so much concern, let me say, over the present government of the Philippines, that should some other government come in in the Philippines, it is entirely possible that one might want to give them a try at ruling the Philippines and seeing whether or not they might be able to do better than the present government that exists there.

Mr. BALL. This of course is the point, it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that there is a tendency to say if the Marcos government goes down then the Communists will take over. There is a perfectly legitimate opposition, which is not Communist at all, and I think to the extent that we can, we ought to be encouraging them in every way. That doesn't mean that we ought to be an instrument in trying to bring down the Marcos government, but certainly we

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ought to avoid the kind of statements coming out of the White House and out of the administration that look as though we are supporting the Marcos government.

Mr. SOLARZ. You both have indicated that you believe that where vital American interests are at stake, it is appropriate to use American combat forces to protect our interests, but that one of the lessons of Vietnam is that where there are only tangential interests at stake, we shouldn't commit U.S. forces.

Mr. BALL. That is right.

Mr. SOLARZ. How would you distinguish a vital interest from a tangential interest and what is the criteria you would look to in determining what is in fact vital and what is in fact tangential?

Mr. BALL. Well, I think you have a spectrum, it seems to me, and on the one hand there is an invasion of the United States. Clearly, we have to react to——

Mr. SOLARZ. It depends on what part of the country, some might say.

Mr. BALL. We wouldn't comment on that.

Mr. SOLARZ. Barry Goldwater once said he would like to see New England and the Northeast sawed off and floated out to sea.

Mr. BALL. Some other people are saying the same thing about the Southwest.

In any event, I think that that is obviously the unambiguous situation. Now, if you have an attack on Western Europe, where there is a serious danger that one of our major allies goes under, obviously then we are in effect bound by our treaty commitments, even though the treaty is not all that explicit as to just what we must do. Now, that is within the framework of not only the treaty, but the NATO organization. We have to respond to that.

It is in the Third World where the problems really arise, where you have so-called wars of national liberation. Here I think we have to be extremely careful. A great many of the wars of national liberation arise from the discontent of unemployed young growing up with no hope and not being prepared to accept the oppressive, brutal governments that their fathers were willing to accept and looking for some way out.

My own feeling is that we have got to be very careful that we do nothing that puts the United States always on the side of the status quo. By the turn of the century—that after all is only 15 years from now—there will be 600 million people in Latin America. When you have a population growth as rapid as you have in Latin America, where in Brazil and Mexico today 65 percent of the people are under 25—and in a few years, 65 percent of the people will be under 20—that means that the people should be moving into the labor force every year in an expanding volume, yet there is no way that some of these countries are going to be able to maintain sufficient economic growth to create the requisite jobs.

What happens? These youngsters move into the cities which are great conglomerations of misery, as Mexico City is today. They can't find jobs. They live in tarpaper shacks in the barrios. So either they go into outlaw gangs and revolutionary activities or they try to get across the border into the United States. I think we have to be very careful we don't alienate a whole generation.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Clifford, would you like to add anything to that?

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Mr. CLIFFORD. Yes, sir. I take a little different tack. I honestly do not understand the preoccupation today with Nicaragua and the suggestion constantly urged that we need funds there, we need more arms there, or that we need American troops there.

I don't consider Nicaragua a threat to the United States or to our security. I think it is a small, backward nation, possibly, with 3 million inhabitants. I am not persuaded that they are spreading some foreign ideology throughout the area. I am not conscious of that. That has not been proven to me. Yet, this curious obsession with it. I think we ought to watch it. I think we ought to continue to try to be friends with them, to try to be helpful to them, in one way or another, but I don't consider that that kind of a situation is one that I would foresee in the indefinite future that we would ever be sending combat troops to.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, you have raised, I think, implicitly an interesting question, which I now would like to address to you.

In the 1960's, one of the major questions that confronted us was whether and how we should oppose wars of national liberation. In the middle-1980's, the question seems to be coming whether and how we should support wars of national liberation and if so, which ones? The Congress, the administration and the American people are currently trying to grapple with this question.

I would like to give you a few such situations and ask you in your judgment, which ones we should be supporting and which ones not, and the basis on which you reach your conclusions. I have in mind three. One is the situation in Afghanistan. Is it in our interest to provide military assistance to the Mujahidin, who are resisting the Soviet invasion of their country?

Second, I have in mind Cambodia. Is it in our interests, as some in the Congress have suggested, that we provide military assistance to the non-Communist resistance forces, not the Khmer Rouge, but non-Communist resistance forces in Cambodia?

And third, obviously here I suspect I know your answer, but is it in our interests to provide military assistance to the Contras in Nicaragua?

In each case, if we should, why? If we shouldn't, why not?

Mr. CLIFFORD. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, I would continue to support the people of Afghanistan. I think we have to be limited in what we do. I think, however, that we can send arms there, in an appropriate manner. I think we can demonstrate a belief in their carrying on the struggle. I believe that if we were to ignore it utterly, we would be defaulting in a worldwide ideological attitude that we have established over the last two centuries. I would do it.

I wouldn't expect that there would be any way that we could assist them with troops. It would never enter my mind to send American troops into Afghanistan. I think only that we can assist them ultimately in getting out of their difficulty which I suppose ultimately they will. Others have tried to move into Afghanistan—the British apparently many, many years ago, then finally decided it was a loser and they pulled out.

In Cambodia, I would say, mainly as a result of my long personal experience there, because it is not a part of the world with which we are intimately associated, because it is caught up in century-old

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feuds, and difficulties that exist in their area, I would be very cautious about that. Certainly I wouldn't make any kind of major effort out there.

I have already stated my view with reference to Nicaragua. I would get our people out of there. I would watch it very carefully, and I add just this last point. If at any point Nicaragua became a threat to us or a threat to the area, in 24 hours that threat could be disposed of.

I have one other closing thought. That is, for instance as you look at Central America, we look at it from the standpoint that the Soviet Union in Central America is our bitter, permanent enemy. You don't ever discuss anything with the Soviets about Central America just because they are our enemy and we accept it, and our relationship between the two nations is basically a hostile one.

I hope that we could get over that. How interesting it would be if we could develop a relationship with the Soviet Union so as situations develop in a place like Central America, we could sit down with them and talk to them about it. We don't seem to be able to do that. I regret that the whole atmosphere these last years has become such a venomous one. It is in that area that I think we could make progress that would be of amazing benefit in any number of worrisome places in the world.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Ball.

Mr. BALL. I subscribe entirely to those views. I would only add with regard to Afghanistan, that I think our great concern there should be that while I would be in favor of sending the small amounts of aid which we are now sending, of continuing that, we have to be very careful what the effect may be on Pakistan, which is the most vulnerable. To the extent that we might compromise the position of the country on the border, then I think we have to be very careful about it.

As far as Cambodia is concerned, I have a little bit the feeling that Mr. Clifford does, that it is a long way away and we don't know much about it. On the other hand, we are not talking of great magnitude of aid and we are certainly not talking about a great American involvement, and to the extent that this could be kept on a level where we give some encouragement without any real commitments, I think that that is probably worth doing.

Mr. SOLARZ. Can I interrupt at this point, because I want to pursue that, and I would like both you and Mr. Clifford to respond. Let me move this from the level of an abstraction to a specific.

The Foreign Affairs Committee, as you may possibly have heard, voted to put $5 million in the foreign aid bill to help the non-Communist resistance forces in Cambodia. The justification for this initiative was that we presumably had two interests with respect to Cambodia. The first was to try to facilitate a Vietnamese withdrawal from that country.

The second was to make sure if Vietnam ever does withdraw, that the Khmer Rouge not return. And it was the feeling of the committee that both of these objectives would be strengthened by providing limited amounts of assistance to the non-Communist resistance forces.

The reason the $5 million figure was chosen was because of the feeling on the part of the committee that this problem was primari-

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ly a problem for the ASEAN countries and China and only secondarily for the United States, and that the estimates we received were that the total requirements for the non-Communist resistance forces in the next year or so would be somewhere in the vicinity of $15 to $20 million, and $5 million of that would be about 20 to 30 percent, and this would maintain the principle that the United States was not going to become the major sponsor of this enterprise, but within that framework, that our willingness to provide limited amounts of military assistance would encourage the resistance movement, it would encourage the ASEAN countries to continue providing assistance, and it would send some signal to Vietnam that it might be more difficult for them to solve their problems militarily in Cambodia than they had previously anticipated.

And I guess finally, the feeling on the part of the committee was that Vietnam is never going to leave Cambodia on the basis of appeals to their compassion or their conscience—10 years after the end of the war in Indochina they still have 50,000 troops in Laos and there is no resistance movement there—and the Cambodian people deserve something better than to be doomed to live in perpetuity as a part of a vassal state of Vietnam. While the Cambodians don't have the ability to force Vietnam to leave their country, it is not inconceivable that if the resistance can become more effective that over time, the Vietnamese, if the price of occupation becomes too high, might be willing to consider a political settlement.

The administration, by the way, which initially opposed this I think largely because they felt that they would run into a buzzsaw on the Hill if they proposed it themselves—is now changing its position, when we demonstrated that we had a 3-to-1 majority for it on the committee.

Of course, as Vietnam proves, having large congressional majorities doesn't demonstrate the presumptive wisdom of a particular policy, but having put that specific proposal in perspective—and this will be coming up for a vote on the floor of the House next week—what would your views be with respect to it? Do you think it is useful to keep this money in the foreign aid bill or would you prefer to see it removed?

Mr. BALL. Well, I had read your column, I think you wrote on this. I was persuaded by it. I think that this is a useful thing to do. I think it puts it in about the right perspective.

Mr. CLIFFORD. If I were a member of your committee I would vote for it, and I think the reason, to a great extent, is our long participation there. I favored our withdrawal and I know now clearly in my own mind, we never should have gone in in the first place, but we did, and by so doing, we did possibly assume some minor commitments, at least of a philosophical or psychological nature, and I would vote for $5 million for Cambodia.

Mr. BALL. I just wanted to say a word on the Nicaraguan issue, but if you were going to speak on Cambodia, we will stay with that.

Mr. SOLARZ. I was going to say that this is definitive proof, if any were needed, that great minds do indeed think alike. I am really pleased to hear what you have to say.

Mr. BALL. I want to make this observation, which I think we ought to bear in mind as contributing to a certain humility with

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regard to interfering in the affairs of small Latin American nations.

Our experience has not been very attractive when we have overthrown governments. We have not assured democracy in these areas. As you may recall, we have had plenty of experience in Nicaragua before. When we sent our Americans there the second time in the 1920's it was because of the fear that then existed of Bolshevistic influences coming from Mexico. What happened at the end of that period, after we had changed the Government, was that we saddled the Nicaraguans with Mr. Somoza, who for the next 40 years oppressed the people and stole everything in sight.

We changed the Government under the Eisenhower administration in Guatemala. We overthrew the Arbenz government, which had been elected, and we replaced it with a succession of military juntas punctuated by assassinations.

We tried to overthrow the Allende government in Chile but it overthrew itself by its own incompetence and the end of that was the Pinochet government.

I only suggest to you that the idea that if we overthrow a government in Nicaragua there is going to be a wonderful democracy emerge when some of the people of the Contras are——

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, I must say I have asked some of the people in the Pentagon if the Contras won and then betrayed the democratic promise of the revolution, would we organize and send into the field counter-Contras to reestablish the democracy in Nicaragua?

I have just a few more questions.

George Will wrote a fascinating article after the Grenada invasion, in which he said that if television cameras had been present at the battle of Antietam, that we would probably have two separate countries today, because it is very difficult to sustain support for a war which is carried into everybody's homes at night on television.

I would like to ask you both what you think the implications are for our capacity to sustain support in our democratic society, for American combat involvements abroad, in the age of television, where the most vital interests of the Nation are probably at stake?

Mr. CLIFFORD. I think it depends inherently upon the reasons for our entry into a combat situation. I would have no concern about the impact of television if television had covered the Second World War. After we were attacked in Pearl Harbor, everybody wanted to get the musket off the wall and go fight. We were fighting for what we believed in all through that war and I think television would have had only a minor impact on it.

What it does is make much more important the basis for our entry. If we have a good, sound basis and the American people are persuaded of it, then I think the impact would be minimal. If it gets into a situation demonstrated by Vietnam, which, as Mr. Ball suggested, the people began to understand the situation before our Government did and they lost confidence in the war before the administration did, then television would have a real impact, and I might say, serve an exceedingly useful purpose.

Mr. BALL. I agree with that.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Ball, you spoke in your testimony about the need for a doctrine of extrication. I thought that was an extraordi-

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narily perceptive proposal, as it were, and observation. You also said—this fascinated me—that you think that when Nixon became President he should have in effect have said to the Vietnamese, we are ready to negotiate an end to this war and, if you don't agree, we are prepared in effect to escalate. I presume that is a bluff because I gather that if we had not been able to reach agreement with the Vietnamese, you would not in fact have advocated an escalation of the conflict.

Do you think it is wise for Presidents to engage in that kind of bluff if they are not prepared to follow through on their threats?

Mr. BALL. In the first place, it depends on how it is done. I certainly wouldn't have had the President go on national television and make this proposal. But if it were said quietly to Hanoi—and we had plenty of channels of communication—there was not a question about that, that is the way it is going to be, and that we have 525,000 men and we are going to go on with this fighting—as a matter of fact, just before Secretary Clifford left office, we made a very strong statement that we were not going to withdraw—you remember that—our forces. If was a very useful statement at that time. If anything, we were going to increase them.

Mr. CLIFFORD. Yes sir.

Mr. BALL. Against that background, Nixon could well have said that quietly to them. I think that our 525,000 men was the one great thing we had to trade.

Mr. SOLARZ. With that analysis, I fully agree. Let me ask you as I approach the very end of this session, I hope you won't lodge any complaints against me with Amnesty International for having abused our human rights by suggesting to you prolonged interrogation and detention without due process of law.

In Mr. Kissinger's memoirs he makes a point over and over again that the Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese, were insisting we overthrow the Thieu regime as a condition for a political settlement. That we clearly could not do because that would have sullied—he argued—the honor of the nation.

Now, supposing in terms of the problems of our credibility, suppose we had tried to work out with the Vietnamese an arrangement when Nixon became President in which we would withdraw all of our forces because the President was convinced of the conclusions to which you had come, and it turned out that the North Vietnamese were not willing to cooperate, perhaps because they thought they would win anyway. Suppose it turned out that they said no, we are not going to reach any agreement with you unless you do remove the Thieu regime, and this was politically unacceptable to us. Under those circumstances would you have favored withdrawing our forces anyway?

Mr. BALL. No; I think if you look at history that was roughly the deal that we got at the end. We weren't required to overthrow the Thieu regime even though, by that time, we didn't have any bargaining position. We had a very substantial bargaining position at the beginning but we blew it, because before Kissinger made his offer of unilateral withdrawal, 20 months had gone by and the President had already said we are going to pull our troops out. So the significant thing is that all the North Vietnamese had to do

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was wait. So they waited and they never signed anything until we only had 23,000 troops down there.

Mr. SOLARZ. What you are saying in effect is that if we had indicated a willingness to withdraw our forces in 1969, they would have not insisted——

Mr. BALL. They would have not. If we could have gotten a better deal than we got at the end we would have saved an uncountable number of human lives.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I would add only this. A President should make the best deal that he can. If a President concluded that we had miscalculated by going into Vietnam, then he should try. I think as Mr. Ball says, at the very beginning when Mr. Nixon came in he could have started right in with them 1 week later, saying "I am new to the whole thing, I am thinking of getting out, I will make a deal with you"—525,000 people.

They went through negotiation, after negotiation, after negotiation. All the time our bargaining position was diminishing. In the last analysis, if you can't make a deal, and you know you are wrong, get out. How many lives of American men are you going to expend in an effort to try to justify a position that is fundamentally wrong?

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, if you put it in those terms, I think it is impossible to disagree. But what if you set against that consideration the possibility that we made a mistake, and can't possibly prevail. What if you came to the conclusion that in that particular instance if we withdrew, it would have a severe impact on our credibility in other countries around the world?

Now, as you pointed out in our testimony, in the case of Vietnam, we were suffering from a perception by our allies that we had lost our wisdom, and so you respond to the credibility argument by saying that our credibility wasn't at stake. But what about some future situation where we come to the conclusion that there would be a serious loss in credibility if we were to withdraw from a situation, yet where we come to the conclusion we can't prevail. Would you say we should withdraw anyway because you simply can't justify a continued commitment of American lives to a hopeless situation?

Mr. BALL. I oss of credibility, when it is apparent that we are not going to prevail, is not much of a loss of credibility. It is a short term affair. People say, well, this one didn't turn out so well, but look what we did in Lebanon. This is the extreme absurdity of a situation where we are talking about it being vital to our interest and then walked out.

Mr. SOLARZ. George, I am going to take this public opportunity, to admit publicly that in retrospect, when we debated this issue on the Donahue Show, you were right and I was wrong. I have been retrospectively persuaded.

Just one or two other questions. You both referred to the fact that 10 years ago the Congress rejected President Ford's last minute request for $724 million in additional aid. I remember that very vividly because it was 3 months after I was elected, took my place in the House as a member of this committee. I was then seated on the next to the last chair all the way on the side, and it was a very dramatic moment for me, and our committee voted to

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reject the President's request for an emergency supplemental. A few days later, the guns fell silent. That clearly meant the war was over.

But if we had accepted his request, if we had provided the emergency funds, do you think the government in South Vietnam could have withstood the final onslaught, or do you think it only would have been a matter of time before they went under?

Mr. BALL. I think it would have been a matter of time. Again, I raise the question, if they couldn't win with 525,000 American troops, how could they win without them? Would you have a different view?

Mr. CLIFFORD. None whatsoever. They were going down hill rapidly. The fact is I became convinced during the year 1968 that the position of the United States and its goal were entirely different from the position of the Government of South Vietnam and its goal. They had no real hope that they ultimately were going to win. But the longer we stayed, and the longer we handled most of the difficulty, the fighting, then the more secure that the Thieu regime would become in South Vietnam. I can see it so clearly.

But just getting to the fundamentals of our position with regard to attitudes, as soon as our country concluded that we had made a miscalculation by going in there, then we ought to get out as quickly as possibly, even though an administration has to admit that it was part of the mistake. That is the very difficult part of it. Human beings hate to admit publicly that they have been wrong. It doesn't make any difference whether it involved a few million dollars, but when it involves the lives of American men, then you face up to that and bite the bullet and get out. There is 4 years of that stuff that went on in the Nixon administration that should never have gone on at all.

Mr. SOLARZ. In light of our experience in Vietnam, do you consider the War Powers Resolution a constructive constraint on Presidential flexibility in terms of introducing troops abroad?

Mr. BALL. I don't think it is an effective restraint at all. In fact, while I am very sympathetic with the idea that Congress should play a very significant role in the question of the commitment of American troops or the sustaining of a war, I don't think you can legislate it in advance in a kind of declaration in a way which contemplates every kind of situation, which can give on the one hand enough flexibility to the President but at the same time, have Congress do some second guessing. Once we have committed troops, the Congress is going to have a great deal of trouble pulling them out. I used to argue this with Senator Javits. I thought that it was not a useful piece of legislation.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Clifford.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I have never quite understood whether the War Powers Act was a limitation on the power of a President, or whether it enlarged the power of the President. It is a very real issue. We can all smile about it, but there is some real question about it. I would like the Congress to take action when necessary in individual instances. I agree it is a very difficult thing to legislate.

Mr. SOLARZ. You both made the point that one of the reasons we didn't invade North Vietnam was because of our fear that this would result in a Chinese intervention. In retrospect, particularly

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given the animosities which have emerged between China and Vietnam, and which presumably existed even prior to the war in Vietnam, do you think that if we had invaded North Vietnam, it would have in fact triggered a Chinese military intervention?

Mr. BALL. I think we overestimated it at the time but remember, this was not very long, it was only a few years after Korea where we had had exactly that experience and nobody wanted to run that risk, and the intelligence that we were getting was pretty confused on the issue.

Mr. CLIFFORD. I feel much more strongly about it than that. I believe the North Vietnamese would have tried every other conceivable alternative than having American forces come into North Vietnam and conquer North Vietnam. After all that had gone on between the two powers, it is a deep conviction with me that they would have called upon the Chinese. The Chinese could have entered and taken over the burden of that fighting, and I think they would rather have dealt with the Chinese with whom they had dealt for 2,000 years than with the Americans.

In fact, as you may know, the Chinese were already helping them. There were 40,000 to 50,000 Chinese who were coming in and circulating and helping do a lot of the road work. They were the ones that rebuilt the railroads every night after we bombed them during the day. There was already a base for them to call upon. The Far Eastern experts that were called in during the Johnson administration, felt very strongly in that regard. I became convinced that they would have called them in.

Mr. SOLARZ. Finally, my last question.

Mr. Clifford, in your testimony you pointed out that in the fall of 1967, you went out with General Taylor to visit the various troop contributing countries—Korea, Australia, and New Zealand—to study the situation, and you said that the heads of government and chiefs of state of those specific countries did not share our perception of the problem.

Well, what was their perception, and to the extent that they thought that what we were doing was a mistake, why did they have their own troops there also?

Mr. CLIFFORD. Two or three reasons. One is that they had troops there because we requested them. The troops were really nominal in size, just a few hundred or maybe a few thousand, but they were cooperating with the United States. The United States was bearing the cost of it. The economic benefits to those nations from the war were enormous. The money flooded into those countries through the tens and tens of millions of dollars. They were all profiting greatly from our concern over it. So I think there was a real economic purpose for their being there.

One visit that perhaps made the greatest impact on me was in Thailand. I had dinner one evening with a man who had previously been Ambassador to the United States and then was in the Thai Government. He said you fellows have got this misdiagnosed. He said, honestly in private, I don't feel any concern about North Vietnam. North Vietnam is not a great industrial power. He said that the thought that the Soviets and the Chinese are supporting them on a march throughout Southeast Asia, I don't believe that, and I

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don't believe anybody in our Government believes it. He said, you fellows have a concern about it but we don't have it here.

And as we went on to other places—I remember Australia and New Zealand, they said we are not going to send any more troops at all. You fellows look at it one way, we look at it another way. We are glad to have you there, because if by any chance we are wrong, you are there and you bear the whole brunt of it and you are paying for all of it.

That is the feeling I came back with. We didn't find those people agreeing.

Why didn't I say at once to President Johnson, get out? The reason I didn't was at that particular time we were getting the most optimistic reports from Vietnam—we were told just wait 2 weeks or 1 month or a couple of months, and we will prevail and Vietnam will have capitulated.

Mr. SOLARZ. You know I just have to tell you, apropos of your comments about Australia. When I was there in July, I met with a fellow who was head of the chamber of commerce in Melbourne, who told me that during the Vietnam war he was a student at the university when President Johnson went to Australia. During the course of one of his visits to Asia, the students were planning a massive demonstration against the President, and they asked this fellow to participate, and he said, "Well, I support the American policy toward Vietnam, so how can I participate? I can't carry a sign saying get out of Vietnam."

And they said, "Well, why don't you come to the demonstration anyway and carry your own sign." I guess they just wanted a lot of people there. He said, on that basis he would come and so he told us he showed up the next day at the demonstration, he held up a sign and his sign said, "Repeal the Wool Tariff." This was a man who had his priorities in order.

Well, I want to thank both of you very, very much. I consider this one of the most extraordinarily interesting and invaluable hearings this subcommittee has conducted in the 6 years I have been chairman.

You both have the rare distinction, in a way privilege, of having been determined prophets during the course of our own lifetime, and I think you can look back on your own role in this sad chapter in our American history with great pride for having seen with vision and clarity the consequences of this involvement, not only for our own country, but for the people of Southeast Asia as well.

I am deeply grateful to you for being with us today and for giving us the benefit of your wisdom.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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